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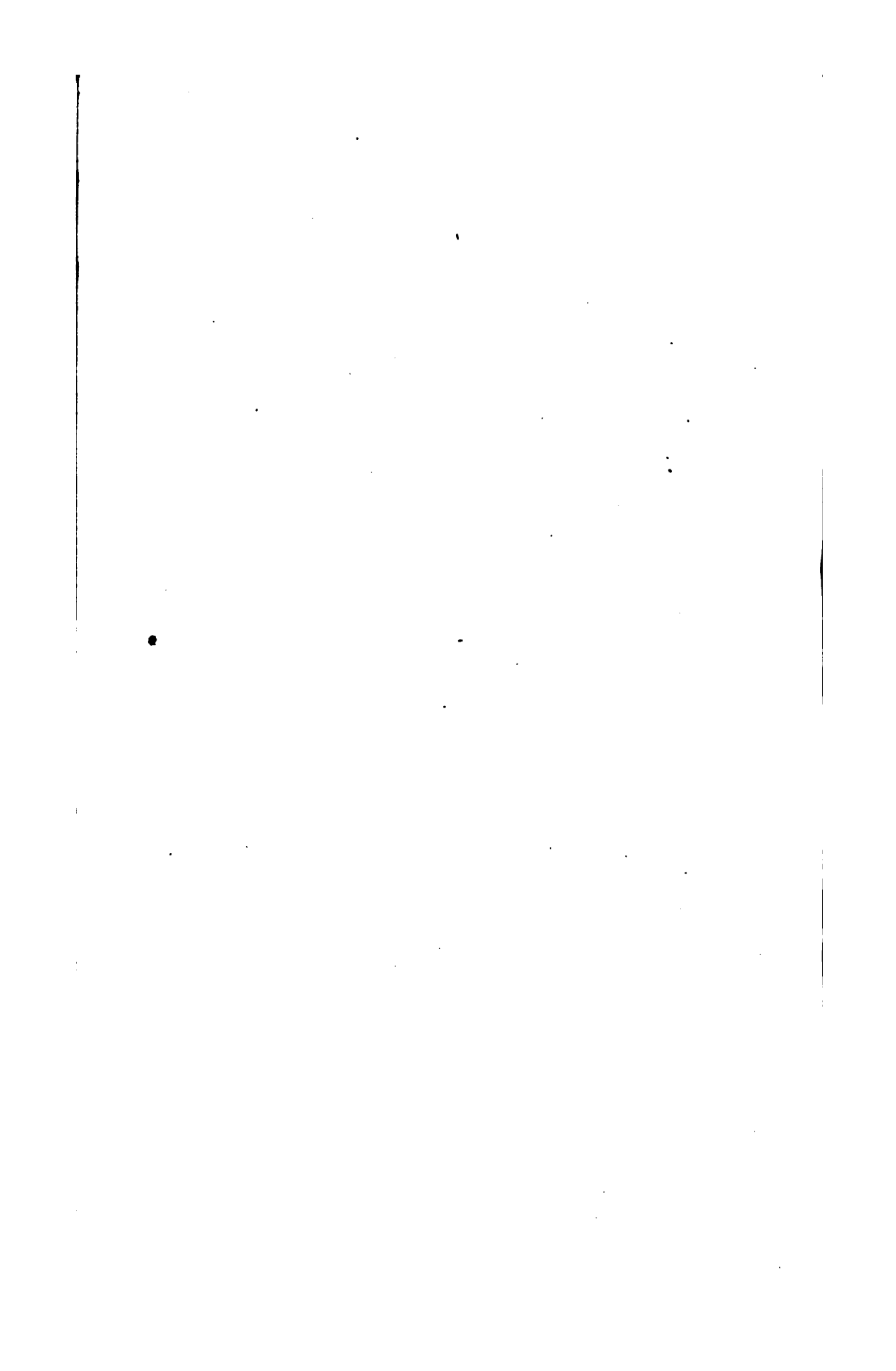
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SERMONS
ON
THE BEATITUDES.

JESUS THE GIVER AND THE FULFILLER
OF
THE NEW LAW.

A COURSE OF EIGHT
SERMONS ON THE BEATITUDES,

ADAPTED TO EACH DAY IN

The Holy Week and to Easter Day.

PREACHED IN ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, CHELTENHAM.

BY THE REVEREND
ALEXANDER WATSON, M.A.,
CURATE OF THE CHURCH.



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TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,
JAMES HENRY,
LORD BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL.

MY LORD BISHOP,

THE kind manner in which your Lordship has been pleased to express yourself in reference to a series of sermons I printed, on "The Seven Sayings of our LORD on the Cross," emboldens me thus formally to offer the present volume for your Lordship's favourable consideration.

The sermons which I now wish to dedicate to your Lordship, were like the others, preached during the Holy Week and on Easter day; and I humbly trust that your

Lordship will accept them as an offering of my grateful respect and thankfulness for the paternal oversight and guidance which it has been my privilege to enjoy during the now nearly ten years that I have been a curate in your Lordship's Diocese.

It was my aim in the former series, to show that the dying words which our adorable LORD uttered from His Cross, are instinct with great truths of objective religion, as well as with precepts applying those truths subjectively. In the discourses which are contained in this volume it has been my endeavour to set forth the reality of the legal obligation of the Gospel ; and to exhibit the truth that HE, Who gave the New Law as our Prophet, Priest, and King, HIMSELF fulfilled that law as our Great EXAMPLE, full of the grace which rebounds from His Sacred Person, as the Anointed ONE, upon the redeemed race of which HE is federally and spiritually the HEAD.

If in any way I shall have succeeded in

strengthening some in this much forgotten view of the Gospel as the highest and most perfect Law, under which the obedience of man has been drawn, I shall rejoice that the vindication of so vital and fundamental a truth shall have been given to the public, in connexion with the tribute of my affectionate and dutiful respect for one, whom I trust and pray the good Providence of God may long preserve to this Diocese as its spiritual Ruler, distinguished by munificence, forbearance, gentleness, and fatherly solicitude for the well-being of all committed to his charge and oversight.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

My Lord Bishop,

Your Lordship's dutiful and

obliged Son and Servant,

ALEX^R. WATSON.

Cheltenham, Lent, 1850.

SERMON I.

MEEKNESS THE RULE OF ADVANCEMENT IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

ST. MATTHEW V. 5.

“BLESSED ARE THE MEEK, FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE
EARTH.”

THESE words form a portion of the opening of that sublime Sermon on the Mount, to which the followers of the Crucified have ever loved to refer, as the great storehouse of Christian ethics. They form, in fact, one of the Eight Beatitudes with which our LORD commenced the promulgation of the doctrine HE came to teach, to enforce and to exemplify. They were spoken by HIM Who was foretold in ancient prophecy: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and HE shall speak unto them all that I shall command HIM.” And it was

¹ Deut. xviii. 18.

in the delivery of this sermon that these words had their special fulfilment. CHRIST was now entering upon His prophetic office, and was to show HIMSELF a Prophet like unto Moses. This great trust our Blessed LORD discharged with a care and fidelity of which the Apostle treats, when he tells us that HE "was faithful to HIM that appointed HIM, as also Moses was faithful in all his house."¹ As therefore Moses from the mountain spake to the people the law graven on tables of stone, so did the Divine Antitype of the Jewish lawgiver give forth His laws and precepts from a mountain, and abundantly fulfil the declaration made by His forerunner of HIMSELF: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."²

But here the parallel ends. By the law was the knowledge of sin: by the Gospel is its remedy. The law was delivered amid thunderings and lightnings, with blackness and darkness, and tempest; but the Gospel is made known in the still small voice of blessing and consolation. As with a beatitude, he who was the regal type of Messiah began the Psalms, so in like manner does the Son of David open His mouth in blessing. The LORD JESUS had come into the world upon an errand of love, and by the gentle wooings of a tempting promise, rather than by the stern terrors of a repulsive threat,

¹ Hebrews iii. 2.² Deut. xxxii. 2.

does HE seek to clasp the children of men in the loving embrace of a willing obedience.

Though HE was a Prophet like unto Moses, yet HE came to supersede, by fulfilling and enlarging, the law of which Moses was the giver. Instead of the rigour of a code which required of the offender an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, our SAVIOUR came to set up the benignity of a dispensation which demanded for the wrong doer that he be forgiven, even unto seventy times seven : and which teaches those who live under its obligation, "if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink." And therefore in due conformity with this, the object of His mission, our LORD rather announces the blessedness of those who do His will, than pronounces the penalty of those who transgress it. HE echoes not the curses with which Mount Ebal rang, where, as it was declared of the elder covenant, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them," but HE issued His law amid benedictions, and gave superabundant cause for the declaration of St. Peter, "God having raised up His Son JESUS sent HIM to bless you in turning every one of you from your iniquities."

Yea, HE, Whose disciples are to be known by this, that they love one another, as might be expected made love, not fear, the motive of obedience. Love was the thing to be done, and the motive too for doing it, and therefore would HE draw men unto

HIM, rather than beat them down before HIM. Moreover, the precepts which our LORD delivered, had so little in them to commend them to men's natural or preconceived notions: they contained so much of paradox, when judged by this world's standard, that had not a blessing stood in the front of them, as they were presented to mankind, we may well suppose that those to whom they were addressed, would have turned away from the contemplation of such distasteful regulations with an aversion which even the gracious mode of their announcement does not wholly remove.

Thus much appears at first sight to commend these Beatitudes to our notice, and much more might be urged in favour of their collective fitness for the ushering in of the Gospel tidings. It is however enough for our present purpose to observe, before proceeding to a particular examination of each separate Beatitude, that while there is a measured completeness in their number, so is there Divine wisdom in the order in which they precede or follow one the other. And, were it my object simply to enunciate the great law of Christian duty, as set forth in these eight blessings, I would not venture to disturb the sacred progression in which they appear before us, now setting forth a duty towards God, and now one affecting man, starting and concluding with the former, and interweaving alternately one and the other in the middle space: neither could I forbear to point out to you the dependence

and cohesion of each part of the Christian building here set up, which finding in humility its foundation stone, displays in Christian endurance, its chaste and crowning finial.

But, beloved brethren, we enter to-day upon the great and Holy week of our LORD's most sacred Passion, and day by day there are special and appropriate relations in which the reverent mind loves to regard HIM, Who now in the commemorative cycle of the Church's faith, draws nigh to the consummation of that earthly ministry which exhibited to an unheeding world the marvel of a sinless Man and a suffering God! In the obedience, and the ignominy of our Blessed SAVIOUR, as consummated in the story of this eventful week, we would fain see the fulness of that blessing which pronounced by the Divine JESUS, has been merited by the LORD HIMSELF, and would endeavour to show you how, upon one Man each and every "Blessed" has been abundantly showered, and how in His perfect fulfilment of all righteousness, is to be found the might wherein His followers hope to succeed in their toilsome ascent to the same glorious summit.

And therefore as the opening commendation of the Poor in Spirit would seem to be most in harmony with the thoughts which will be about us on Tuesday next, the day more especially of our LORD's Agony; and as meekness would seem to be the twin sister of Humility, regarded as the fountain of Christian obedience, it appears to be a fitting

theme for our meditations to-day, when we are led by this Sunday's title, Palm Sunday, to regard our LORD as fulfilling, by His entrance into the devoted city, amid the hosannas of little children, the demand of ancient prophecy, "Behold, thy KING cometh unto thee, *meek*, and sitting upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

I propose then to consider in respect of these Beatitudes :

1. To whom they refer.
2. What they promise.
3. How our Blessed LORD merited and received them.
4. How we may hope to have our part and lot in His obedience.

And may that HOLY SPIRIT who so sanctified the humanity of our Incarnate God, in the Womb of the Ever Virgin, and so dwelt without measure in HIM Whose second anointing to His threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King, took place after the ministry of John the Baptist in the holy flood of Jordan, that in HIM was found no sin, while by HIM was rendered that perfect obedience to which His Godhead gave the infinite merit of a full propitiatory Satisfaction, — may that HOLY SPIRIT, Whose grace rebounds from CHRIST our Head, upon all His true living members, be so with us in our meditation on these sacred themes, in this Holy Week, that on our coming down from this mount of blessing, our lives may be radiant with the Divine

Presence, and shine with its glory, as did the face of Moses in old time.

And now, beloved, proceed we in our inquiry: Who are they whom the text pronounces blessed? The meek. And wherein does the grace of meekness consist? Like most Christian graces, it has a divine and a human aspect. We may be meek towards God, meek in respect of man.

Meekness towards God implies a ready submission to His Will, involving an implicit faith and an unreserved obedience—a cheerful endurance and a complete conformity. For meekness is the moderation of that wrath and anger whence arise impatience, waywardness or disobedience, and a sullen silence. Therefore, though faith, obedience and patience, be in themselves virtues, apart from meekness strictly considered, yet meekness is that grace which places us in the position to exercise in their fulness all these several virtues. In relation to man, meekness implies modesty, humility, and reverence towards all superiors—with obedience superadded if they be in authority. Towards equals, if they be endeared to us in intimacy and friendship, meekness implies the absence of provocation—the bearing with insult—mildness of discreet reproof—and the receiving with patience and thankfulness their counsel, when they point out our own faults, together with a mutual submission one to another, in holy love, every one thinking another better than himself. Towards enemies, meekness calls us to

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exercise love, to do good to them, to please and pray for them, and to overcome evil with good, not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. To those who are neither friends nor foes, meekness bids us bear ourselves civilly, modestly, and forbearingly, while to those whom we have wronged, this same grace calls upon us to acknowledge the fault, and be ready to make satisfaction, and to evince a hearty desire for reconciliation. And in respect of inferiors, meekness calls upon us to be courteous, kind and loving, full of the *spirit*, as distinct from the *effort* of *con-*
descension, neither oppressing nor tyrannizing, nor acting imperiously, nor taking the rod when it may be spared, nor provoking to wrath any, whether servants, subjects or children.

The *meek* then are they who have learnt the great lesson, that there is but One Will Whose fiat is paramount throughout the universe ; and who constantly bend their own desires to that One Will, suffering nothing which falls out to unduly disturb or incommode them, lest they should perchance be found unawares fighting against God. Anger may be aroused, but it will not be cherished ; indignation may be excited, but it will be checked, so soon as it shall have accomplished whatsoever shall have been necessary to vindicate the majesty of a stern regard to the revealed Will of the Most High. The life, no less than the language of the meek man will be,
“ To this end was I born, and for this cause came I

into the world, that I should do, not mine own will, but the Will of HIM that made me."

And what is the meek man's blessing?—"He shall inherit the earth."

Now, in this title to the possession of the earth, we see a temporal and a spiritual blessing—the temporal as the type and earnest of the spiritual. The present conveyance of the meek man's blessing consists in that cheerful and contented temper which sees everything as a boon and gift from a merciful and indulgent FATHER: and the very virtues to which meekness leads the way, are those which carry with them their own present consolation. What gives to us such grace and adorning in the eyes of others, as the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit? Who that has conquered revenge can fail to own the glory of those trophies which come of the conquest of self? or who that has turned away anger by the soft answer, but knows the joy which glows from the thought that bitterness has thus been arrested in its course. Again, is it nothing that the meek man outruns all the sages of antiquity in the race of benevolence, by attaining to that which heathenism never dreamed of, and of which Judaism fell short—even the love of enemies? Or further, who shall tell the peace and equable comfort of him who suffers not adverse events to overwhelm him, but is tranquil and free from all the storms that anger, and pride, and revenge, are ever evoking? Nay, in the ordinary course of events, who has so many ready

and willing to be taxed in his behalf—ready and willing to acknowledge his claim upon their sympathy, their exertions, their possessions, as the meek man? Who has such abounding influence, such real power, as the man whom none can charge with the folly of hasty anger, the bitterness of studied malice, the injustice of tyranny, the rancour of revenge, or the repinings of disaffection? Thus does the meek man inherit the earth in this time present; and as the *temporal* Canaan was to every Jew the type, and to the obedient Jew the pledge of the *eternal* land of promise; so is the earth here a real inheritance below, and an earnest of the one above. And this is the meek man's advantage above others; that he has conveyed to him, as it were, a double Canaan: the same happiness attending him, which we believe to have been the portion of Adam, in his original creation, a life in Paradise, as the forerunner of a life in heaven. We look not to see the meek installed in the high places of the earth, though this too is sometimes thrust upon them when they think not of it; and without coveting or desiring such distinction, they are oftentimes found to be in virtue of their very forbearance among the wealthy and the powerful. Still in its necessary bearing the text is rather to be taken as descriptive of the temper which finds happiness everywhere, than of that condition of splendid greatness which so often verifies the converse of the Psalmist's declaration—"A small thing that the righteous hath, is better than great riches of the ungodly."

And now having seen who the meek are, and what is the blessing which belongs to them, let us next inquire how our Blessed LORD was among the meek, and so merited their blessing; how HE inherited the earth, and so received that blessing. And first—How did our LORD merit this blessing? It were easy to say in one word, that it was His meat and His drink to do the will of the FATHER Who sent HIM, and that HE never contravened, even amid the sorest temptation, the minutest requirement of that Will in ready and cheerful conformity to which true meekness consists; but it is better that we should descend to particulars. Our LORD emptied HIMSELF of the glory which HE had with the FATHER before the worlds began, that HE might dwell a servant amid the race whom HE had created and now sought to redeem. And in the humiliation of His human nature, HE, God and Man in One PERSON, had a perfect human will, susceptible of influence from the emotions of pain and pleasure: and accordingly there was merit in the resolve which submitted to pain, or made forfeit of pleasure, rather than betray impatience with the restraints imposed upon human obedience, or rather than demur to the demands made upon human forbearance.

Having premised thus much, we may see how, in all the several respects wherein meekness consists, our Blessed LORD was ONE Whose it should be to inherit the earth.

Viewed in relation to God, what is so perfect as

the meekness of the LORD'S CHRIST? Has HE not in very truth set before us a perfect pattern of unswerving obedience, implicit faith, and cheerful endurance?

When was our LORD found repining? In the counsel of the Everlasting THREE, HE, the Second Person of the One GODHEAD had undertaken man's redemption. It therefore was the Will of GOD that the WORD should become Incarnate; that JESUS should conform to all the circumstances of man's estate, should grow, and be faint, should hunger and be weary; that the CHRIST should be scorned and despised—that HE should teach those who yet refused to learn—rule over them who regarded not His sway—and be HIMSELF amid black reproach and ignominy, the Victim offered by His own Everlasting Priesthood—and yet, while HE fully performed all this, in no particular did HE disturb the graceful outlines of that Portrait which HE gave His followers to copy, when HE bid them “Learn of ME, for I am *meek* and lowly in heart.”

HE submitted to be born of humble parents; and though born without sin, claimed no exemption from the bloody rite of Circumcision; to the Church no less than to the Law gave HE credence, and yielded HE allegiance—the Feast of Dedication found HIM among the worshippers—the catechetical school of the Jewish doctors numbered HIM among its learners; and amid all the corruptions of Judaism, the glosses of the Lawyers—the perverse-

ness of the Scribes—and the false traditions of the Pharisees and Elders—H_E maintained a steady adherence to God's ordinance; and though once, or it may be twice, the zeal of His FATHER'S House transported H_{IM} to anticipate that work of reformation which was to follow the rending of the Veil of the Temple in twain when all should be finished, yet it was His teaching, that to the Scribes and Elders, or those that sat in Moses' seat, reverence should be paid. His meekness forbade His refusing to submit to any law which could, through revelation, or sufficient custom, plead the force of a Divine Command. It concerned H_{IM} not that the jewels of Urim and Thummin were set in base alloy, to the exclusion of the pure metal, amid which of old they shone; it was God's ordinance that the Priest's lips should keep knowledge; and nothing in the after life of the Babe cradled on the spot over which the star came, and stood because there the young Child was; nothing belied that duty of seeking the law at the priest's mouth, which was prefigured when at Jerusalem the star forsook the Magi, and left them to the guidance of the ministers of the Temple, and thus H_E works a miracle, that the temple-tax be paid.

These very Priests, whose authority H_E recognizes, cast H_{IM} out as evil, brand H_{IM} as a blasphemer, and seek to take away His life. H_E resents not their injustice. H_E forsakes not the fold of which they are the unfaithful shepherds. H_E anticipates not the setting up of His own king-

dom, that HE may cut short their misrule ; but their feasts HE observes—in their synagogues HE teaches, their customs HE respects—and all this because His meekness forbad His assuming that vengeance in His condition as an heir and a servant—which is the sole prerogative of GOD, the LORD and FATHER of all, in the might and Majesty of His unencumbered Sovereignty. Yea, when after a cheerful endurance of privation, our LORD came, as the consummation of His bitter Passion, to endure the agonizing desertion, which wrung from HIM the piercing “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani ?” even then His meekness forsook HIM not ; but in the meek bowing of His Head, we see in expressive action, what in words HE had before announced to be His desire—“Not My will, but Thine be done.”

And if we pass from the consideration of meekness, as a duty done to GOD, to view it as a grace exercised towards man, then the realization of the character of Meekness in the Person of CHRIST our LORD is a theme far beyond the handling of human pen.

There was one occasion when he, who was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth, spake unadvisedly with his lips ; but when was the Antitype of Moses found to do so ? Was it when His Mother chid HIM for the anxiety HE had caused her in lingering behind in His FATHER’S house, when she and Joseph had set forth on their homeward journey ? Nay, HE owns her

authority, and bears her company to despised Nazareth; though HE respectfully reminds her of the homage HE owed to His FATHER'S service. Was it when HE was subjected to human teaching, from Whom all human teachers derive their learning, if so be they teach aright? Nay, HE observed the custom of the time, and in the midst of the doctors was guided by them in the hearing what they delivered, and the answering of the questions which they asked. Was it when His earthly parents required His obedience? Nay, a carpenter's reputed son, HE submitted to the discipline which was needful to guard His Virgin Mother's name amid the unheeding daughters of Israel, and which sheltered His own infancy and her helplessness—and HE scorned not to learn a carpenter's trade. Was it when the Samaritans refused to receive HIM? Nay, the fiery zeal of the two sons of Zebedee has no counterpart in their LORD and Master; HE rebukes them, but spares the Samaritans, His contemporaries. Was it when evil men called HIM Beelzebub? Nay, HE enunciates the forgiveness of all who dishonour HIMSELF, though driven to vindicate the awful Majesty of HIM, the HOLY SPIRIT, Who is the Inspirer of all good thoughts—the Bringer to pass of all holy resolves. Was it when, as the Gospel for this day used anciently to teach—HE descended into Jerusalem, amid the hosannas of the multitude, that HE forgot HIMSELF, and carried HIMSELF haughtily, because men welcomed HIM as

a conqueror, and hailed HIM as the King come to Zion? Nay, HE looked forth upon the devoted city, and in the thought of her woes, His own honours move HIM not. HE sees Jerusalem—and meek and lowly in His regal triumph—HE weeps. Was it when of HIM, Abraham's free-born descendant, they demanded tribute money, that HE reclaimed, forgot meekness, and refused to submit to an unjust impost? Nay, meekness caused HIM to work a miracle, rather than provoke a contest, founded on an apparent disobedience. Or was it that our LORD spake unadvisedly with His lips, when led by a traitorous disciple, an armed band came forth to take HIM prisoner? Nay, meekness is still the bright gem which sparkles most of all in the brilliant crown of His great perfections. An over eager follower smites off the ear of the servant of the High Priest; the meek LORD stretches forth His hand, heals the wound, and bids His disciple put up his sword. Amid contumely and insult, HE is dragged off to the Judgment Hall, but HE opens not His mouth—makes no attempt to avenge HIMSELF. All forsake HIM—HE utters no reproach. St. Peter denies HIM—HE resents it not.—The populace mock HIM—the officer strikes HIM; but HE, meek and lowly in heart, simply demands, “If I have done evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou ME?” Nay, innocent HE is condemned—guiltless HE is led forth to a malefactor's death. And lo! for His murderers the prayer goes

forth—"FATHER, forgive them, they know not what they do."

If ever then man merited the blessing which the Divine JESUS pronounced to belong to the meek, it was that same JESUS, Who exhausted its transcendent fulness. And would you know how HE received that blessing, how HE can be said to have inherited the earth? I would remind you that while yet HE was accomplishing the manifestation of His meekness during His visible sojourn in His humiliation on this our earth, HE had possession of the earth in that truest and highest sense, that to it and its baubles, and its transient joys, HE was in no sense subject. HE had that calm and equable wisdom, that blissful contentment, which enjoys what it has with such unreserved thankfulness, that there is not room for the desire of what it has not. During His thirty years' privacy, HE made happy, by His obedience, the home of His Virgin Mother, and her espoused husband. In daily toil, as the condition of suffering humanity, HE found the sweetening of His daily bread: and in daily thankfulness the exclusion from His pure breast of the aching anxiety, the cankering craving for to-day's supply of the morrow's wants. And when HE had entered upon His appointed ministry, though HE had not where to lay His head, yet in communion with HIM to Whom HE was about to bring the rebel race of man once more as children, HE took none account of sleepless watchings and the pinching cold.

And ever and anon, from the woman at the well—in the rich man's house—at the publican's board—by the woman that was a sinner—was H_E refreshed and honoured, welcomed and freed from want, and treated with respect. H_E had all at His command. Wind and earth, and ocean, owned His might—devils quailed before His nod—and diseases owned H_{IM} Physician, not less of body than of soul. Nay, death itself unloosed the bars of the body's prison-house, and let the living soul once more go in, and give to motionless forms beauty, energy and life; the nets of the fishermen were filled—the loaves were multiplied—the thousands fed—and fragments greater than the original stock remained, if only H_E spake the words; but H_E came to teach that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, and so H_E chose rather to inherit the earth by rising superior to its treasures, and making H_{IMSELF} independent of its joys, than in cumbering H_{IMSELF} with much goods laid up in store for many years.

And though we see H_{IM} to-day welcomed by the daughter of Sion as her King, and view H_{IM} as, in processional triumph, H_E enters in kingly state with the branches of the conquering palm strewed in His regal path, yet soon does H_E withdraw H_{IMSELF} from the hosannas of the acclaiming; and avoiding all just cause for the scandal which would represent H_{IM} the disturber of the temporal power of the Cæsars, H_E withdraws H_{IMSELF}

amid the seclusion of Bethany, and partakes of the frugal hospitality of Mary, and of Martha, in the house of that beloved Lazarus, whom His tearful Might had rescued from the fangs of a foul corruption.

And yet there must be testimony given to his Lordship as the Son of Man. We find it in the timorousness of Pilate—nay what is the darkness which shrouds the abashed face of the orb that rules the day; what the convulsive throes of earth's womb, as in the terrors of an earthquake she yields up her dead; but so many testimonies that already the standard of the Son of Man is planted in this lower scene; that earth is His and travails with His redeemed? Yea, and now the Son of Man in the person of His Spouse the Church does inherit the earth, and the day is hastening on when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. What is the unbosoming of the treasures of earth and sea, and air, and sky at the talismanic touch of philosophy amid Christian light; what is the reservation of the scanning of the forces which govern the material world, as the discovery of Christian times, but a yielding up of Lordship to the Son of Man? What are the mitigation of the horrors of war, the elevation of the weaker sex in the scale of social being, the striking of the manacles from the person of the slave, the gentle sway of Christian courtesy, the substitution of hospitals and asylums for the bar-

barous cruelty which would give to death, the arm that was paralyzed, because it could no longer contribute to the general safety ; what is the triumph of moral over brute force, and the subjugation of the millions of heathendom to the thousands of Christendom, but the receiving by the Son of Man of the inheritance of the earth ? Would that the conquering nations of Christendom would ever bear this in mind, that when they make conquest, they take possession for the Son of Man, and then assuredly the subjugated should learn the blessings which flow from the truth that God hath exalted the Meek and Lowly JESUS, and given HIM a Name which is above every name ; that at the Name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of God the FATHER.

And now I must say in few words how we may hope to have our part and lot in the meekness of CHRIST our LORD.

We must learn as did our JESUS to see God's hand in every circumstance ; a FATHER's mercy must be seen to inflict every chastisement ; a FATHER's bounty be owned in every mercy. Impatience with the course of Providence, disaffection and an impaired loyalty to the Church, because of seeming corruptions, the forsaking of the assembling of ourselves together because things are not as we would

have them, an unwarranted judging of our spiritual Mother, a readiness to take offence at every scandal, a hasty condemnation of what appears to us amiss when censure is not our province, all these things are in so far offences against meekness, and destroy our title to a share in the blessing pronounced and won for us by the Son of Man.

We must leave to proper authority the correction of evils ; to competent tribunals the redress of injuries. We must bear and forbear, forgive and seek forgiveness. We must not sin by our anger, nor let the sun go down upon our wrath. We must not see in the one instance, twice repeated, of our SAVIOUR'S life, in which, laying aside as it were His meekness, he stood forth terrible in His Majesty, the avenging God, any warrant for Uzzah-like stretching forth our unbidden hand to stay the ark of God. HE was God's anointed servant, though man's true yoke-fellow, and on HIM was laid the reformation no less than the recovery of man. And so, while we may see a warrant for holy indignation within our province, when God's sanctuary is profaned, and it is His Majesty, not our littleness, which we seek to vindicate, yet assuredly the flashes of Divinity which made the sellers of doves, and the changers of money fall down abashed at the upraised arm which threatened but with a scourge of small cords, shall not come forth from his person who takes upon himself a reformation which is beyond his province : while no less certainly they who have

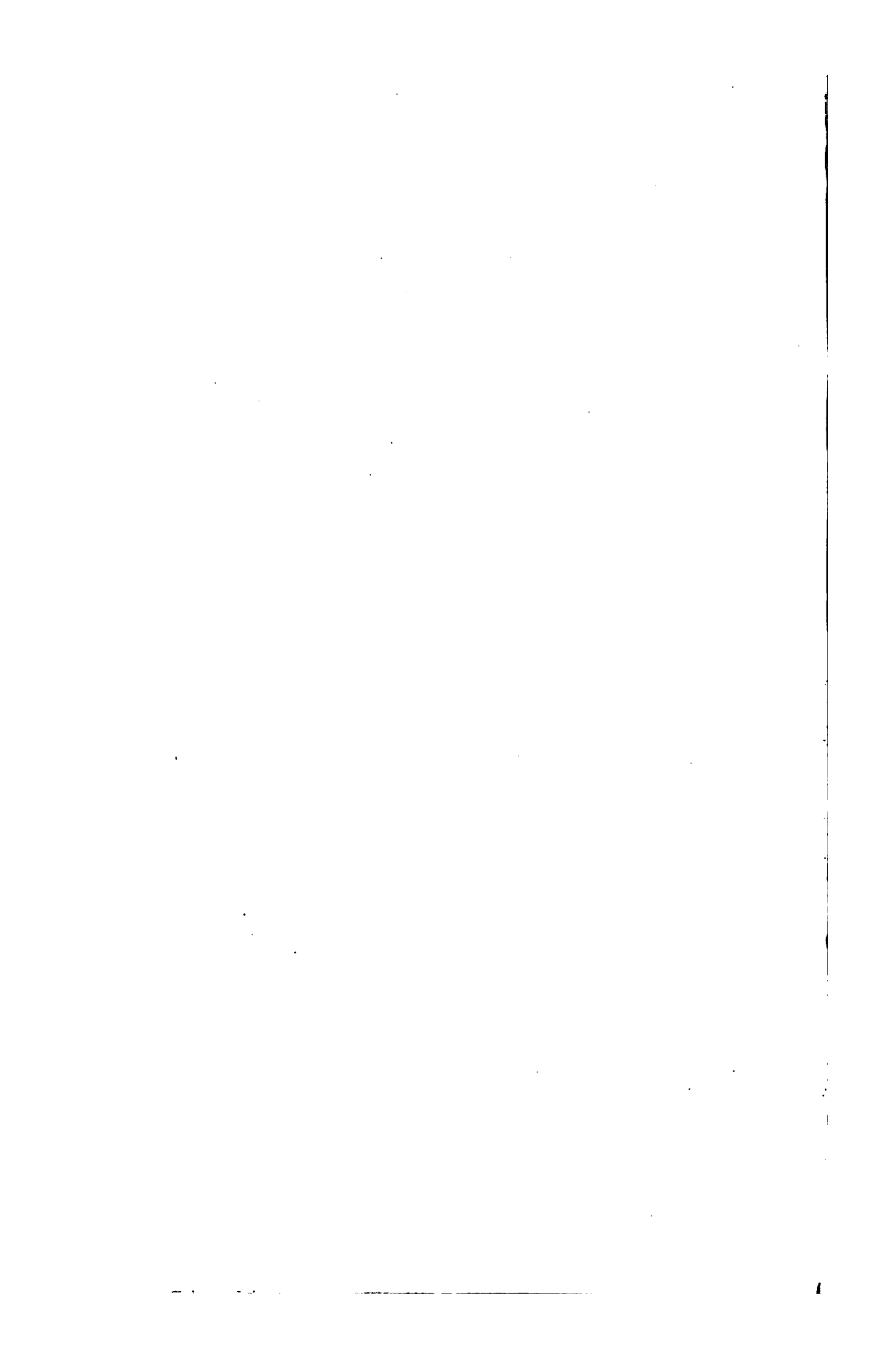
22 MEEKNESS THE RULE OF ADVANCEMENT [SERM.]

right on their side, shall not in the moment of just indignation fail in might.

Be it then ours to have ever before us the meekness of our LORD ; let us learn to be content, though men think little of us ; let us forbear though they wrong us ; let us endure rather than rebel ; suffer rather than smite. Let us have ever present to our minds, when others wrong us, how deeply we do wrong to ALMIGHTY GOD ; and when our natural tempers would bid us call down fire from heaven upon our offenders, let us remember our meek LORD, bidding His rash disciple sheath his sword, and ponder on that same LORD's forbearance to enlist the armies of heaven in His behalf, though at the moment of His most cruel oppression, HE could have asked His FATHER, and HE would have given HIM twelve legions of angels.

Thus let us cultivate meekness, and then fall out what may, we shall inherit the earth, in quietness we shall preserve our souls. Amid the din and strife of falling dynasties, we shall have no concern, but to bear ourselves meekly, that so, when it shall not be a throne here, and an imperial diadem there which is trampled in the dirt, but when the crash of elements is upon us, and the earth shall be burnt up like a scroll, and the heavens melt with fervent heat, and all that now is great and glorious, and noble, shall have passed away like a dream, and be as though it had never been, that so in the end of all things, when there shall be a new heaven, and a new

earth, we may take the rank of blessedness among the meek ; and inherit the blessings, the glories, the happiness of that earth which shall have no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it ; for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof ; yea, inherit that earth, and sing the Hallelujahs of our God, the song of Moses and of the Lamb, in the land which has no temple, because God is all in all, because the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, and the Lamb, are the Temple of it.



SERMON II.

THE REWARD OF THE MERCIFUL.

ST. MATTHEW v. 7.

**"BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN
MERCY."**

THE incidents which we are called upon to commemorate to-day in regard of our Blessed LORD are but few, and do not in their direct and immediate bearing, connect themselves with any of the Beatitudes. I have therefore chosen for our consideration this morning, that one of these Divine sayings, which with greatest fitness adapts itself to each and every act of the closing scene of our LORD's life, nay which belongs to every incident of His sojourn among us, and which is no less His attribute as a God than His especial grace as a man.

On the evening of yesterday, our LORD after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, stayed not in the crowded city, but returned to the quiet of Bethany, and the affectionate care of the home of Martha and of

Mary. On the morning of this day, HE returns into Jerusalem, and on His way curses the fig-tree, thus mercifully indicating by an act of punishment on an unfruitful tree, that just judgment which God had in store for the rebellious nation, which, amid all the fair show of an outward religion, had none of the fruits of true holiness, and so enabling those who would profit by the warning to escape themselves that woe which was their nation's doom.

Arrived in Jerusalem, HE betakes HIMSELF to the Temple, and there finding those who profaned His FATHER'S House, HE drives them thence, and teaches that there is a reverence due to the sacred place where JEHOVAH manifests His Presence.

Pass we now to the consideration of the Beatitude before us.—Who are the merciful? They are those in whom charity has its highest exercise. Mercifulness is the abundance of charity or goodness or benignity. There are in Holy Scripture, two words nearly akin one to the other, commonly found together, which we call justice or righteousness, and mercifulness; but of these the latter is descriptive of a much higher degree of excellence than the former: the first signifying, that legal charity which both the law of nature and of Moses required to be performed to our brethren; but the second an abundance or supereminent degree of bounty. We have examples of the difference in the ways of the righteous man and the good man as we find them in that memorable passage, "Scarcely for

a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die."

Now the merciful man is one who gives and forgives.

He gives to those who want, according to the best of his ability, whatever that may be of which they stand in need; if any are in distress through lack of worldly goods, the merciful man will tax his own abundance to relieve their want; nay he will apply to himself a close and pinching rule, rather than fail to mitigate another's misery; he will give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and clothing to the naked; it will be his desire too to ease pain; the sick he will visit and their ailments he will seek to cure, and into the troubled mind he will pour the balm of a Divine consolation. He will not say "Be warmed or be filled," and give nothing wherewith those to whom he speaks may be either one or the other; but having given them the means of increased comfort, he will accompany his alms with words of kindness, which shall serve to lift the delivered out of his misery. But the merciful man will also concern himself with the good name of his neighbour. He will not suffer others through any fault of his to lie under harsh or unjust imputations, he will seek to vindicate an honest man's character when it is defamed, and nothing will be more tender to him than a brother's reputation. The merciful will also be much concerned for the souls of all with whom he can have

to do. He will have the word in season and he will speak it kindly; he will be ready to urge to the performance of duties which are in danger of being neglected; he will direct the meek eye of pale suffering to the FATHER, Who never leaves His chosen to be alone, but fills with calm and even with joy those, whose trials are of the severest kind. In temptation the merciful will seek to supply the means of escape, he will ever be strengthening others in the ways of God, and will be constantly seeking out opportunities of doing good.

And since mercifulness consists in forgiving no less than in giving, the merciful man will make it his aim to forgive injuries and insults, and he will be careful as much as in him lies to remember, that to reward merit and to relieve distress, are two distinct provinces of Christian duty; and while he is careful so to distribute his alms as to afford encouragement to industry and honesty, yet he will also remember that he is not to allow trespasses against men, nor sins against God to cool or lessen his charity to others, whose claims and calls upon him as his neighbours in distress are plain and manifest. He will love and compassionate the wicked, and show towards enemies and sinners no less than to friends and good men, all those effects of Christian mercy, which they may most stand in need of for their present or future good. It is the command of our REDEEMER, "Be merciful as your FATHER is merciful," and HE maketh His sun to

shine upon the evil and upon the good alike. And what were we when HE employed a will about us, but rebels and outcasts from His Presence?

Yet HE loved us and showed mercy to us even then, yea full as Holy Scripture is of the mercy of our good God, in nothing is this mercy more manifest than in that tender expostulation with which ever and anon GOD seeks to reclaim the erring and restore the fallen. What more exquisite than His expostulation with HIMSELF upon the disingenuous behaviour of His people Israel? "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?—How shall I deliver thee, Israel?—How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within ME, My repentings are kindled together;"¹—What moving melting strains are these!—What a lively breathing image of mercy and of pity is here, and yet it is but an image still, vastly short of the original as will always be, whatever is said or thought of the infinite mercy of GOD; which mercy is to be the example which the merciful will love to copy.

And next let us inquire what blessing is pronounced for the merciful. It is that they shall obtain mercy. Now, though the grace of mercifulness is one which is to be regarded solely in its exercise towards man; the infinite perfections of GOD rendering it impossible that HE should be an object of compassion to any whom His hand

¹ Hosea xi. 8.

created, His goodness sustains, and His love makes happy ; yet the grace is one which is rewarded both here and hereafter. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

The merciful obtain mercy here, in that every act of kindness has a reflexive influence upon him who exercises it, according to that rule of our LORD—“it is more blessed to give than to receive.” If we consider mercy to be the causing of happiness or ease to others, then assuredly they who show it obtain it themselves. What greater delight is there than that of having made another man happy, and where is there one more glorious, in that we are hereby admitted to resemble God ? And not only has the merciful man the present delight arising from his good deeds, but he also puts himself thereby in a capacity for receiving mercy at the hands of others, should he in his turn come to need their help. It is the declaration of the Book of God, “I never saw the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread :” and why ?—but because, having been himself merciful, he in his turn, when he needs it, obtains mercy. It is true there are apparent contradictions to this rule ; for what wise provision of our Heavenly FATHER will not and has not the sinfulness and imperfection of man frustrated and contravened ?—But still nothing more naturally recommends a man to the good will and compassion of others than a merciful and benign temper, and generally speaking, if men be but tole-

rably well disposed, and have any sense of justice and gratitude, they will, though not themselves under the strict obedience of this Divine law of mercy, show kindness to the merciful. Alms never yet impoverished an estate. The widow's cruse of oil had failed, and her meal wasted, had she not given of her penury to the man of God. Temporal abundance is found to wait on him who, just towards God and man, is full of mercy as His Heavenly FATHER'S Steward. He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the LORD, and look what he layeth out it shall be paid him again. He shall find the bread cast on the waters again after many days, and if he gain not temporal abundance here, yet assuredly it shall draw down upon him the mercy of spiritual abundance of grace and of strength in the time of temptation. Still we are not to place our account in this life; though even here we shall obtain mercy if we show mercy. It is a part of our heavenly discipline, that it is especially incumbent upon us to show mercy, and it is hereafter in heaven that we shall in the truest and highest sense obtain mercy. Good works are so connected with our final happiness, as that they are the discipline whereby God's Presence becomes to us heaven. Into that Presence we could not, without them come; nor as far as we know, could we without them be otherwise than unhappy, even if we were once in heaven. For heaven is not a state but a place; a place with employments in the pro-

per discharge of which happiness consists ; now of these employments the chiefest is the waiting upon God in all the solemnity of praise and worship, with a dutiful alacrity to execute all His will and commands. But the doing of God's will in all things and the offering to Him the homage of praise comes not by intuition. Those only can take part in heavenly service who have mastered the habit which qualifies for its adequate performance, and this habit must be acquired on earth or we shall never learn it in heaven. It is now in this life present that we are on our trial, and according to the use we make of our present opportunities, will be our future condition. Each separate act of the regenerate man is as it were a seed corn, which will either spring up in the garden of God, a noble and beauteous plant bearing fruit unto all well pleasing ; or else will burst forth a hateful weed, drawing down condemnation upon the unhappy child of Adam by whom it has been cast into the ground. All our separate actions have their counterpart in the world to come, and such as we become here, shall we be in kind hereafter. It is by separate acts that so much of the character here is formed. Life is but an assemblage of separate acts, and this it is which gives to good works so prominent a place in the work of our salvation. They are the workings within us of the SPIRIT OF CHRIST, whereby HE graciously moulds us as vessels of honour meet for the MASTER'S use. Good works

done in the grace and strength of CHRIST, through the preventing and co-operating grace of GOD, are the divinely appointed means whereby we go on from strength to strength, and from grace to grace, and thereby are we fitted for our place in the Body of the REDEEMER, and made lively and polished parts of that spiritual house, in which HE is set as the chief corner stone elect and precious. But not only is holiness in this life the condition of and preparation for happiness in the next, but there is also a close connexion between particular graces or acts of virtue and a specific reward in the heavenly kingdom. Thus as we saw yesterday, that there is a sense in which the meek shall inherit the earth, in which none but the meek can so receive that inheritance; and as we shall see hereafter,¹ that it is because the pure in heart have purified themselves even as GOD is pure, that to them is vouchsafed the gracious promise of such a vision of the ALMIGHTY as none other can attain to, nor they themselves by any other process: even so, it is by showing mercy, by being ourselves merciful, that we alone can hope to obtain mercy. Not more surely does fire burn and water drown, than shall he, who in the full significance of that term, is merciful obtain mercy. His being merciful is the condition of obtaining it. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." "Charity covereth a multitude of sins," for not only does it

¹ See Sermon VIII.

throw a cloak over the faults of others, but on account of its presence in ourselves, God is not strict to mark what is done amiss. His punishments are mostly answerable to our sins, HE thinks good to give us a sight of our transgressions by the manner of His inflictions, and so HE is also pleased to apportion His rewards to our graces. And the merciful man shall find when he comes to stand at CHRIST's judgment bar, that his mercifulness has gained of God for him mercy, in forgiving, pardoning, and not imputing sin. True it is that the man of God must be perfect and entire, wanting nothing, but thoroughly furnished unto all good works; yet there is no one grace which shall go so far towards obtaining him mercy in that day, when it is the time of Justice, as that of Mercifulness. And we may well believe that if the merciful man, for want of other necessary parts of Christian perfection, shall not be able to stand in the last judgment; yet his fall shall be much the milder, and we may not doubt that he shall have great abatements of punishment made him on account of this one excellency. One way or other the merciful shall be sure to obtain mercy, nor will God forget this labour of love. Let us so strive to let mercifulness go hand in hand with all other Christian graces that it may ensure to us an abundant increment of grace, which we shall on that account receive, even a measure of mercy which shall finally rejoice against judgment.

And now, how did our Blessed LORD merit and

receive the Blessing of the Merciful. In the exercise of that Divine attribute of His God-head, our LORD undertook the mysterious and costly redemption of fallen man. One with the FATHER from everlasting, to HIM belongeth the title JEHOVAH, the LORD merciful and gracious, yea, to HIM belonged from everlasting that endearing Name by which the MOST HIGH ever loves to describe HIMSELF, when it is in the mildness of His sway, and not the terrible severity of His power that HE is declaring HIMSELF; for it is to be remembered, that when our LORD, in the hour of His most cruel Passion, called My GOD! My GOD! HE called upon the FATHER, not by His title of parental love, and endearment, but by His title ELOHIM, thus naming the Judge of the world, then doing the extremest right upon His own SON, Who was treading the wine press alone, in the person of all mankind, whose nature HE had taken everlastingly into His God-head. But it was not as God, but as man, that the CHRIST merited the blessing of the merciful, and therefore we may look in HIM for all those emotions of the human soul, which in their separate and joint exercise fill up our notion of mercy. Of all human spirits, that of JESUS our LORD was the most excellent, and as His was the most perfect of all the souls which ever dwelt in human flesh, so was HE the most merciful and compassionate of men. What was there which HE did not give? what which HE did not forgive? Where wrought HE His first

miracle? At a marriage feast at Cana, in Galilee, testifying by His significant condescension to His host's necessity, the fulness of the bounty which His dispensation should confer. Read we not that H_E went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people; and that His fame went throughout all Syria, and they brought unto H_{IM} all sick people that were taken with divers diseases, and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and H_E healed them? None ever came to H_{IM} and sued in vain. Nay, H_E waited not for man's petitioning. We read how when "J_{ESUS} went forth, and saw a great multitude, H_E was moved with compassion towards them, and H_E healed their sick." We know how upon the hunger of the famishing crowds H_E took compassion and fed them by miracle. We think of His mercy, and we embrace in the thought His whole life, for it was one living, speaking act of mercy. H_E had tenderness for the little children, compassion for the widow mourning her only son: tears for the grave of Lazarus,—tears for the impending woes of Jerusalem; a merciful forgiveness, and a call to amendment for the woman taken in adultery; a tender sorrow for the fall of His zealous Apostle; an affectionate thoughtfulness for His mother's woes, as H_E com-

¹ St. Matt. xiv. 14.

mended her to the care of the beloved disciple : but why seek to enumerate examples of that which is summed up in that most exquisite verse, "When HE saw the multitudes, HE was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd?"¹

We are told that "HE was moved with compassion;" a translation far below the force of the original word, and yet how full of meaning. His whole heart yearned, His inmost soul melted with ardent love and pity, and was poured forth in mercifulness. In very truth, the mercy which brought our God down to earth, found in GOD INCARNATE, its highest and truest expression. His very deeds of justice were acts of mercy : such was the cursing of the fig tree in which the offence was not visited upon those by whom it was incurred, but on an inanimate object, so that those most concerned might in time take warning. In mercy HE forbore to work many mighty deeds, in the midst of unbelief, lest HE should increase the guilt of those who rejected HIM. In mercy HE drove the buyers and sellers from the Temple, that none might be ignorant of the purity and reverence which God demands. And what words shall describe the mercy which upon the Cross yearned for His very murderers, and sought the good of those who did HIM evil ? Surely, if any must obtain mercy because they have been merciful, it is the LORD JESUS, Who of a truth has won

¹ St. Matt. ix. 36,

this blessing. And has HE not? Yea, HE has won mercy from an offended God for a rebel tribe. To HIM indeed, on earth, there were but few found to show mercy; yet ever and anon there were those who had a thought for His necessities, and a care to relieve them. But HE laboured not for HIMSELF, but for human nature; and for human nature HE has indeed obtained mercy. HE has taken with HIM into the heaven of heavens, the tenderness of spirit which HE possessed on earth, that so from heaven HE may shower mercy upon us. Though in other respects impassible, and encircled with Divine glory, yet is HE still our merciful High Priest. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Merciful to others, HE obtained mercy. Though in fulfilment of His own righteous purpose, HE went forward unto death, yet at Pilate's judgment bar HE was pronounced innocent, and retained even in condemnation, an untarnished Name. In His Agony, an angel was sent to strengthen HIM; and amid the terrible desertion of God's Presence HE was nerved to endurance, and obtained mercy, even to the forgiveness of the whole sinning race of Adam. Yea, HE obtained mercy in the reverent treatment of His sacred Body, and still more in that God did not suffer His flesh to see corruption, nor His soul to remain in hell. HE obtained the mercy of a triumphant Resurrection; and in HIM is that full and abundant treasury of mercy, whence is taken all that

the fallen race of man need for their restoration to their FATHER'S favour.

Righteousness and peace have in HIM kissed each other; justice and mercy are not twain, but one. The all-merciful Son of Man yet obtains mercy in the recovery of every wanderer, the pardon of every penitent, and the perfection of every saint. Abundantly did HE show mercy, and richly has HE obtained it.

And now ask you how you may have your part, and lot in this mercy obtained by CHRIST our LORD? If you would receive the reward, fulfil the duty to which it is annexed. There is not one among you but must acknowledge the need in which you stand of mercy, and that unless you obtain mercy, your lot is forlorn and hopeless. For, what is your standing in God's sight apart from His mercy? You cannot look upon His justice, even through the veil which His Mercy interposes between it and you, and not fear: how then should it be, if that awful attribute of His Majesty were exhibited to your sight in all its terrible nakedness? Better could the natural eye bear to look upon the brightest of the rays which stream from the glorious orb of day, untempered by the darker hues which soften that brightness into the soft and delicate thing which that same eye drinks in with so much pleasure, and which we call light, than could man's heart and soul contemplate God's justice apart from His mercy, and live! It is of His mercy alone that

we are spared from day to day, and not cut off in the midst of our impenitence and our wickedness. "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is His faithfulness." But over and above the mercies with which HE surrounds us day by day, there is coming a perilous time in which we shall stand in especial need of mercy: in which, so to speak, we shall have to gather into a heap the fruits of all the mercies which have already been bestowed upon us. There is a time of need coming, in which it will most of all concern us to obtain mercy, and find grace to help. I mean that time when the earth shall shake, and the heavens be rent, and the LORD descend with a great shout, and with the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God; when earth and sea shall give up their dead, and those that are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air, and so shall be ever with the LORD. I mean that time when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of HIM that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of His wrath is come, and

¹ Lam. iii. 22, 23.

who shall be able to stand? In that day you will be glad enough of mercy. Would you make sure of obtaining it? Be merciful now, for blessed are the merciful, they shall obtain mercy. Ask you what it is to be merciful? I answer, the merciful man is he who has a sad heart, who counts others' misery as his own, and is sad at their grief, as at his own. It is doubtless a chief portion of showing mercy to be kind according to our ability, but this is not all, we must bear one the other's burthens in all the many ways in which the sympathizing Christian needs no further guide than his enlightened conscience,—no other rule than that laid down for him by His Master, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:" no other perfect Pattern than that of HIM Who pronounced the rule, and HIMSELF went about doing good; no greater encouragements than are afforded in the lives and deaths of all those CHRIST'S faithful servants, who like St. Matthew, arose, and at the SAVIOUR'S call left their accustomed seats of worldly calling to follow HIM, and become His instruments of compassion in the recovery of a fallen world.

Acts of mercy draw down twofold blessings. They bless those on whom they fall; and still more, they bless those by whom they are wrought. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." It is a gracious promise, and it is a full and abundant one. Your reward does not depend upon the worthiness of the object of your

bounty. So that you exercise a sufficient caution to guard against the more obvious frauds to which benevolence is exposed ; it is well to remember, that to relieve misery, and to reward virtue, are two very distinct duties ; and that while the latter is grateful and pleasing to the well-regulated mind, to do the former is a positive duty of those who are the children of HIM Who causeth His sun to shine upon the evil and the good. Selfishness and indolence are so ready to learn the welcome lesson that it is no part of charity to encourage imposture or to lead the poor into habits of improvidence, by making for them that provision which they ought to make for themselves against the hour of need or sickness ; that even the best of men would be in danger of mistaking the suggestions of avarice for the dictates of Christian prudence, were it not that alms-giving is a duty necessary to our salvation,—a sacrifice which we are bound to offer by the same commands which enjoin upon us that we pray for our daily bread.

Happy ye ! faithful sons and daughters of the Church who have not to-day to learn this grand lesson of CHRIST's service,—that those who relieve the need of others for His sake, shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. You know, that while when ye have done all, ye are but unprofitable servants : it is HE Who cannot lie, that has said : " Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

SERMON III.

A HEAVENLY KINGDOM THE REWARD OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

ST. MATTHEW V. 3.

“BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE
KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”

ON their way from Bethany to Jerusalem on this the third day in advance of our LORD's most sacred Passion, the disciples remark the fulfilment of the curse which yesterday was pronounced upon the barren fig tree, and our Blessed LORD makes the application of that event which is most agreeable to His mercy and wisdom. HE exhorts to faith, and while HE insists upon the might of prayer, HE enjoins the necessity of forgiveness. And on reaching Jerusalem HE forthwith gives utterance to numberless words of wisdom. HE meets the cavilling question of the scribes and elders who impugned His authority with a challenge respecting their treatment of St. John Baptist ; HE utters several parables,

and has a ready answer alike for the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees. He then pronounced the eight woes which we find in St. Matt. xxiii., and having commended the poor widow's offering of the two mites which were her all, He goes out of the temple, addresses the Jews for the last time, foretells the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the end of the world, and having given utterance to the Parables of the Ten Virgins, the Ten Talents, the Sheep and the Goats, He went out at night and abode in the Mount of Olives. And this being the scene of that greatest and most intense Agony which our Lord subsequently underwent, our minds are accustomed on this day in the fulness of subjects strictly belonging to other days, to dwell upon that most astounding proof of the fierceness of the wrath of ALMIGHTY GOD, which thus treading the wine press alone, the Son of Man endured for our sakes. And therefore, I have chosen to-day to consider the opening Beatitude of the eight, which we shall find to have been most abundantly merited by the Son of Man, whose bitter sufferings were willingly undergone, and whose humiliation sprang of His own free choice.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Now wherein does poverty of spirit consist? We shall best arrive at its meaning if we consider what is meant when we speak of any one as a man of spirit, as having a spirit of his own. We intend thereby to express that bearing and carriage which comes of the con-

sciousness of some power and superiority which entitles us to somewhat of pre-eminence and consideration. We mean, moreover, a temper which will not submit to injustice, but is ever ready to assert its own right and will not allow itself to be taken advantage of or "put upon." Poverty of spirit is the absence of all this alacrity to stand well with others, it is that submission to injustice and wrong, that lowly behaviour which comes of a deep consciousness of our own unworthiness, an abiding sense of our own weakness. To be poor in spirit is to be little in our own conceit, to feel self-loathing from a feeling that we are the meanest and vilest of creatures—the least of saints—the greatest of sinners. It is to be the very reverse of that which is described as the state of the Church of Laodicea, so far is it from the spiritual pride which said she was rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing, having a full consciousness of that of which she was ignorant, namely, that she was wretched and miserable and poor and naked. Poverty of spirit is that temper of little children on which our LORD bestows such high commendation, and which implies weakness and insufficiency and dependence. They are the poor in spirit then who starting with a mean opinion of themselves, never suffer themselves to be led away into high-mindedness by the splendour of anything that is great, nor the conceit of anything that is good in them, but on the contrary, ever keep their eyes fixed upon their

wretchedness and unworthiness as sinful dust and ashes ; and thus are they enabled like the long line of saints, confessors, and martyrs, to press forward to the prize of the high calling that is before them in faith and patience, humility, and meekness, mortification, and self-denial, charity, and constant perseverance unto the end. He who is poor in spirit loves not the world, and so escapes this mode of enmity with God. The love of the world is destructive of the love of God, but to him who is poor in spirit the world with its fair and gallant show offers no attractions ; he has no pride for its pomps to feed, no ambition for its honours to gratify, no covetousness to be exercised on its riches. He is at peace with those around him, for he has no self-sufficiency which interferes with others' aggrandizement. He shrinks from sin and from defilement, for already he is weighed down with the sense of the weight which the past has accumulated upon him. He absents himself from the turmoil of worldly strife, for he has no heart to be contentious. He is most entire and unreserved in his dependence upon God, for he feels that except as he is supported from above, he is the weakest and most abject of beings. And on these accounts we may see why it is that poverty of spirit is in so especial a manner a Gospel grace. That heathendom knew it not as a virtue, but despised it as a fault, is only what might be expected, and when any under Judaism attained to it, it came

of the forward looking glances which they enjoyed of the times of refreshing. It was no part of the Divine Wisdom to enforce this poverty of spirit as a matter of direct and necessary obligation, or as conferring pre-eminent meetness for His favour. It is true the Psalmist was inspired to pourtray this poverty of spirit, as that to which himself had attained when he declares, "I am not high-minded, I have no proud looks, I do not exercise myself in matters that are too high for me, but refrain my soul and keep it low like as a child that is weaned from his mother, yea my soul is even as a weaned child." But, this notwithstanding, as a dispensation, the Jewish religion served to fix the mind to a great extent on temporal advantages, and with a desire for these poverty of spirit could not well coexist. The Jew was not called upon expressly to abstract his desires from the things of the world. Nor unless the people proceeded to covet unjustly, that is, to desire what belonged to another, were they taxed with a grovelling spirit and an earthliness of soul. In truth, earthly-mindedness was as much an imperfection in itself then as now, and was as much forbidden, according to the hidden sense of the law; but the letter did not reach it, because then was the state of imperfection, and many things were permitted because of the hardness of their hearts. Now, however, the Christian law as a law of fire purifying and warning, actuating and enlightening the conscience rather than primarily affecting the

outward behaviour, separates and dissolves those strong ties which fasten down the soul to earth, and first and foremost in the rank of Christian virtues stands the blessing of the poor in spirit.

And what is that blessing? "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." In other words—in true poverty of spirit is implied all necessary preparation for everlasting happiness. And a little attention to that wherein we have seen poverty of spirit to consist will show both that this it is, and why it is so. All that we have from God is of His free grace and favour. All is gift, and all must be received and acknowledged as such. The poor in spirit, as they alone are those who truly feel their need, so are they those alone who are never ashamed to own it. Then again in that the kingdom of heaven, viewed as a blessing in this life present, is an admission to the means of God's favour, so it belongs to the poor in spirit in agreement with that elsewhere promise, God giveth grace to the humble, but He resisteth the proud. A blessing there is which waits upon the poor in spirit, which the haughty and the proud can never know. What among the good is more lovely than this poverty of spirit, whereas its opposite brings around us none but flatterers. Of the poor in spirit does the kingdom of heaven indeed mainly consist, and their special heritage it is. We have then here an assurance that for the poor in spirit, the Church on earth is especially designed, a truth elsewhere taught us

when St. John was assured by the answer of our LORD to his messengers, the poor are evangelized, wrought upon by the Gospel: and as when our LORD declared, He that shall humble himself as this child the same shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And if for them the Church on earth is designed, then to the glories of the Jerusalem above are they assuredly destined, for the Church on earth is the discipline whereby we are trained for heaven, and he that lives on earth the life of a humble Christian shall be sure one day to reign the life of a victorious saint.

To membership then in the living manhood of the Man of sorrows, are they admitted who are poor in spirit, and if only they persevere unto the end, and let patience have its perfect work, then have they their sure fruition hereafter, when as kings and priests unto GOD they shall rule in that Kingdom of CHRIST our LORD which shall have no end. To other graces are promised specific blessings, to this one mother of graces, luxuriant seed-plot of holy virtues, and fountain of all obedience, and preparedness for Divine favour, is made over a title to present grace as the earnest, the pledge, and means of future glory.

Let us now see how in the manhood of the REDEEMER was evinced this poverty of spirit which has fully merited the bestowal of the "Kingdom that cannot be moved."

GOD humbled HIMSELF and became a Man. In

the moment of the Incarnation there was an astounding earnest of the poverty of spirit which should be found in HIM Who while yet in the womb was named JESUS our SAVIOUR. In subjection to His earthly parents, in compliance with ritual requirement, in submission to temporal government, we see that manifestation of poverty of spirit which we have already considered as meekness. We have to-day to view our Incarnate God earning the blessing which belongs to those who view themselves as base and mean and vile, as unworthy, and imbecile for good, and who are weighed down not only with a sense of infirmity, but a consciousness that guilt has made them obnoxious to Divine wrath, and makes them unworthy of the Divine favour, and the joys of the Divine Presence. And how can the Son of Man be poor in spirit in this sense? HE was all pure, and in HIM was no sin. How then could HE judge HIMSELF unworthy of Divine favour? HE was God as well as man; nay, as man, HE was inhabited by the Divine SPIRIT without measure. How then could HE regard HIMSELF as weak and miserable? Never man spake like this man; never man did as this man: how then could HE regard HIMSELF as one of no account, as vile and worthless? It is a surpassing mystery: let us contemplate it with reverence. Assuredly, were we bid seek out the one grace which, necessary and appropriate and natural in His followers, was yet impossible in HIM their Master, it would be this one

of poverty of spirit which we should consider as incompatible with the ineffable perfections of that manhood which H_E has taken up into His everlasting God-head. That H_E should be meek, contradicts not our notion of true greatness ; that others should cause H_{IM} to mourn, we attribute to that Divine sympathy which gives much beauty to the mantle of mercy in which H_E is encircled : that H_E should make righteousness His meat and His drink, and for that righteousness be persecuted and hated of men : that H_E should be pure in heart and make peace ; these are indeed all attributes which we look for in the REDEEMER of mankind, but that H_E should be poor in spirit, that H_E should have a mean opinion of HIMSELF ; that H_E should be weighed down with a consciousness of alienation from Divine favour, and of banishment from the Divine Presence, that H_E should mourn from the sense H_E had of His own need ; surely this is indeed a marvel : yet so it is !

There is that in the mystery of the Incarnation, by which our Divine LORD was admitted to so full a participation of the woes of our humanity, that though our sin could not reach H_{IM}, nor our defilement touch H_{IM} so as to impair the perfection of His obedience ; yet H_E did really and truly make His own, as in the sight of ALMIGHTY GOD, all the sins original as well as actual, of the whole world ; all that have been committed in and since the hour of the first transgression ; all that shall be com-

mitted in the interval between the present and His Coming to judge the world. Here then we learn the secret of the poverty of spirit of CHRIST our LORD. On HIM were laid the iniquities of us all. While acknowledging HIM to be our Propitiation, and Satisfaction to His offended wrath, God saw, in the Divine JESUS, His own well-beloved SON rendering in a perfect human nature a full and entire obedience. HE saw in that same JESUS, One upon Whom HE poured out to the full the vials of His wrath, giving HIM to drink, even to the dregs, the cup of His Almighty vengeance on a guilty race. And in the sense of the accumulated sin, past, present, and to come, of a fallen world, a rebel and outcast race, the LORD JESUS CHRIST felt the need HE had for poverty of spirit. All high imaginings were cast down in the thought of His deep humiliation: all conceit of any thing that was good was shut out from His own eyes in the presence of so overwhelming an amount of sin and evil.

We know how the good citizen, and the generous patriot feels the disgrace which tarnishes his country's fair name: we know the sinking of spirit with which members of a family are weighed down when one of their number has incurred shame or punishment by some grievous fall: and the blot upon an escutcheon reaches in its humiliation far beyond the wrongdoer, who was its cause. This feeling would account then for poverty of spirit in the Divine REDEEMER. HE had emptied

HIMSELF of Divine glories, and had become one of a vast family, all of whom had sinned and come short of the glory of God. HE had the alliance of a common nature with those upon whom God looked forth from the holiness of His heaven, to see if there were any that walked uprightly, and lo ! there was not one. HE had taken in the pure womb of the Ever-Virgin, a humanity sanctified from the first by the miraculous conception of the Divine SPIRIT ; and sustained from the moment of His Birth by this same Spirit, HE had none occasion of reproach within HIMSELF. But HE was a man ; HE was the kinsman of sinners : HE was a man, and shared the nature of those who for disobedience were under the Divine wrath. But this was not all. HE was to stand in the place of sinners. HE was to be adjudged a sinner, and from His love for sinners, was to suffer in their stead : to suffer, not their penalty merely, but to have imputed to HIM their guilt. HE was to pass through all the forms and conditions of a sinner in the sight of God, of men, and of angels.

And here His own innocence, His own purity, but aggravated His sense of the ignominy which was laid upon HIM. To the impure, sin is not hateful. To the unholy, there is no instinctive shrinking at the presence of sin's defilement. God's judgments do not reach the hardened. God's displeasure passes over, and leaves unscathed the man dead in trespasses and sin. Even thereafter "as a man feareth, so is God's displeasure."

The all-holiness then of the CHRIST, but served to deepen His poverty of spirit. HE knew, in virtue of His omniscient God-head that HE would be enabled to work out the salvation of man. HE knew that the devil should come and depart, and find nothing in HIM. HE knew that God's grace was sufficient to sustain His own manhood in unsinning obedience ; but HE knew also that that obedience could not be accounted as a vicarious Offering to which His Divinity should give infinite merit, unless HE had imputed to HIM that which could not attach to HIM. Though free from sin, to the charge of sin HE must plead guilty, and the penalty of sin HE must suffer. Yes, HE was conscious that the hour was coming when, in the place of sinners, accused of blasphemy, and though acquitted of sedition, yet by strange injustice, incurring a Roman punishment for a Jewish offence, HE should die a malefactor's death. HE knew that before that final cry, " It is finished," with which HE should bow His head and give up the Ghost, HE must stand in God's unveiled Presence, a sinner ; nay, that from that Presence HE must be banished, as a sinner. And HE knew that being deserted by God on the Cross, that in His sinless soul HE might feel their torments, who die in unrepented sin : HE should further have to appear in the world unseen, in the circumstances and condition of one who had undergone the penalty of sin. And though His soul was not to be left in hell, nor His body allowed to see corruption, yet the consciousness of the need there was that in ful-

filment of His own righteous purpose for the recovery of man, HE should appear then as a sinner before His FATHER, would serve to beget in HIM that poverty of spirit from which in no one instance did HE ever depart. HE Who was not less the Truth, than the Way and the Life, could not feign a part. It was no mere pretence which weighed down our JESUS to the ground. It was a reality which carried HIM by night to sojourn in the Mount of Olives, in that garden of Gethsemane wherein was wrung out the oil which has flowed to the anointing of His redeemed. HE realized a world's iniquities: HE bore the sins of a whole race. In HIM, man the sinner appeared at God's judgment bar; and by His endurance of the penalty of sin, was man forgiven! We need not wonder that poverty of spirit was not only found in our Blessed LORD, but was in truth His chiefest and most distinguished and distinguishing attribute as the Son of Man.

When once we lay hold on the great truth of the Incarnation, we see how the spirit which emptied itself of eternal glories, is likely to be found throughout its earthly sojourn, poor, and in humiliation. Accordingly, we wonder not that it should be of mean and poor parents that the SAVIOUR was born; a low estate would best consist with the feelings of HIM Who was to be regarded in the place of sinners. We marvel not that over His brightness HE should ever and anon draw a cloud to shut it out from unheeding eyes. We admire the poverty of

spirit which forbade the devils to publish His Divinity, which restrained men in the proclamation of His miracles, and allowed not His Disciples to publish His transfiguration. We see it also in the washing of His Disciples' feet, and in His intercourse with publicans and sinners; but it breaks forth with the most overwhelming vividness in the whole nights passed in prayer, in the forty days' fast which preceded His ministry; in His sleepless watchfulness in the cold night air, upon the mountain and in the desert; and in that awful agony, when there would be upon Him the terrible consciousness that now the final scene was at hand. Poor in spirit indeed, was He there: it was no imaginary sinking of heart; no assumed humiliation. It was depth of suffering in which His human nature needed and accepted angelic ministry; and in the horrors of Gethsemane, and the tortures of mind and soul on the bleeding Cross, where His sufferings received their consummation, we see ratified that title to the designation of the poor in spirit, for the receiving of which His whole life, from the nativity in Bethlehem, to this hour of woe on Calvary, was the preparation.

If then to any belongs the blessing of the poor in spirit, surely it is the heritage of our SAVIOUR. And did not the Son of Man receive the kingdom of heaven? is it not of the Son of Man? Yea, it is in very truth His own, and He gives it to others. In His earthly life His poverty of spirit admitted

HIM to consolations, from which a proud temper, a self-sufficient spirit would have shut HIM out. The strength to endure unto the end, had not come but for the intensity of that prayer, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from ME." "If it be possible;"—possible, consistently with the salvation of man, and Thy righteous judgment against sin. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from ME. Yet not My will, but Thine be done." Yea, the poverty of spirit which veiled His Divinity, when the multitude, armed with staves, came to take HIM, and which suffered the ignominy of the Judgment Hall, and the passage to Calvary, was rewarded by the setting up of "the Kingdom that shall not be moved." As regards this time present, the Son of Man has His Mediatorial Kingdom founded on His Resurrection, the immediate reward of His humiliation. HE the Son of Man now rules in His Church on earth, destroying the power of sin, as already HE has exhausted the penalty of sin. Sin and Satan, and death are now the objects of His sovereignty, and are falling each day at His feet, and His regal power as the Son of Man, dwelling on earth in the person of His Church, will be wielded by HIM in earth and heaven, until all these enemies shall be subdued. But the reward and blessing earned by the poverty of spirit of the Son of Man shall not cease then: HE has received an everlasting Kingdom, of which the present is but the forerunner.

When all the enemies of CHRIST shall be sub-

dued : when all the chosen of God shall be actually brought into His Kingdom : when those which refused to have HIM to reign over them shall be slain : that is, when the whole office of the MEDIATOR shall be completed and fulfilled, then every branch of the execution shall cease. Prophecy shall give way to intuition ; present fruition will render unnecessary oblation and intercession, and perfect security will need no actual defence and protection.

But though the regal office, so far as it is a part of the Mediatorship will be resigned with the whole, when for that Mediatorship there is no longer room for exercise ; yet the kingdom of heaven, the blessing of the Son of Man, in that HE was poor in spirit, shall not then cease. HE shall still be a King. The reward was given HIM, because of what HE suffered, and shall not cease when the work is done. Nay, HE hath so won for human nature the Kingdom of heaven, that HE is to make us all kings and priests for ever unto God. Yea, we shall, so be we too are poor in spirit, reign with HIM for ever and ever. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of His CHRIST, and HE shall reign for ever and ever.

Blessed then for ever be the Son of Man, in that HE has inherited the blessing of the poor in spirit. All thanks, all glory, all praise be to HIM that HE took our nature ; that HE bore our griefs ; that HE endured cruel mockings ; accepted as His rightful lot, buffetings and scourging, and misery, and con-

tumely. All glory to HIM for His deep humiliation, His utter self-renunciation, His deep consciousness of unworthiness. All praise to HIM for His fasting and temptation in the outset—His strong crying and tears in the close of His ministry; and above all for His piercing Agony, and His endurance of the Cross, despising the shame; be all thanksgiving rendered unto HIM, for thus is HE set down at the right hand of God. Thus as the federal Head of redeemed man, has HE repealed the first Adam's curse, and fully as the Son of Man, JESUS the CHRIST, has HE merited and received the blessing which the Divine JESUS pronounced when in the opening of His Benedictions, HE said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Be it our's then, beloved, to learn of JESUS. As to the *cause* for poverty of spirit, we are in reality what HE only was by imputation. Let us see that our own needs work in us, that they did in HIM. Our poverty of spirit for His sake shall be accepted and shall be blessed. Can we look upon ourselves and upon HIM? can we look on our sinfulness and God's holiness? can we think of what we are by nature, what we are in daily act, and then be proud and self-dependent? Let us realize this truth, that whereas we are sinful, our JESUS was holy, and then assuredly we shall not dare be otherwise than poor in spirit, since in HIM this grace had such full and perfect expression. Let us unlearn our selfishness, resign our self-dependence, and own that we are nothing except what God

enables us to be. Let us ever be mourning for our sins, ever cherish a consciousness of the infinite distance at which we are separate from God ; let us know that our means of restoration to HIM is through membership in the Man of sorrows ; through our part and lot in HIM Who more than all the sons of men was lowly in spirit though HIMSELF the LORD of all. Then we too shall be poor in spirit, and if poor in spirit we shall have the grace which God gives to the humble ; we shall partake of the means of grace here and possess that glory hereafter of which already we have the hope. Make not forfeit of heaven by pride, self-dependence or self-sufficiency : but own that for all and in all you trust to God. Receive all from HIM, hold it as a gift, and be thankful for it as far beyond anything which you could merit. Be poor in spirit as knowing that you are no longer creatures whom God's hand has made, but sinners, whom His Justice has condemned ; while yet you are redeemed ones, to whom His mercy in the poor and despised Nazarene has reached, and then shall you know how true it is that " Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven." Walking now in faith and love in the courts of the Zion which is below, you shall learn the chant of the choir which is around the throne, and shall have your joint-sovereignty with HIM the exalted SAVIOUR, Whose Kingdom is for ever and ever, the possession of that complete eternity of the duration of His humanity, which henceforth is coeternal with His Divinity.

SERMON IV.

THE SATISFACTION OF THOSE WHO SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS.

ST. MATTHEW V. 6.

“BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH DO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER
RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED.”

WE are now come, beloved, to that eventful day in the Church's year, on which was planned the sad treachery of Judas ; the day on which the LORD of Life was betrayed and sold by one of His own disciples and familiar friends, into the hands of His most malicious enemies. What awful testimony have we here to the depravity of the human heart, and the deceitfulness of sin ; what sad proof of the danger of sinning in the midst of privileges, of the corroding influence of worldly desires, and of the sad tendency of a heart set on the things of time and sense, to wander far away from holiness and from God, the Source of holiness. Our LORD this

day foretold to His disciples the treachery which awaited HIM, and while the chief Priests and Scribes were hesitating upon the course they should take, fearing an uproar, if they should openly attack HIM: lo Judas presented himself before them, pleading, doubtless, his knowledge of our LORD's retirement, and furnishing a clew to the ruling passion of his life in his inquiry: "*What will ye give me and I will betray HIM unto you?*" His covetousness had before been evidenced in his murmuring at the honour done by Mary in the anointing of our LORD; he then made his zeal for the poor a cloak for his wish to gain possession of the money which would be placed in the common purse, of which he had the charge; and now, by more direct bargaining, he seeks to indulge his love of money. He fulfils ancient prophecy, and takes a price for the priceless head of his LORD and Master. That he really supposed his venal act would issue in his LORD's condemnation, is perhaps more than we have any right to suppose. Possibly he expected that our LORD would work His own deliverance from the hands of His enemies; for we read, that when he saw that JESUS was condemned, he repented himself. He had been eye-witness of our LORD's many miracles, and could not possibly suppose that any force could take HIM captive, and might well be self-deceived as to his power to betray the innocent blood, or deliver up the Just One. He might have hoped to gain the wages of guilt, and yet be found rather to

have deceived his suborners than delivered up his Master into their hands. Be this as it may ; in the text we have the exact antidote for the guilt of him and such as him. His affections were set on things of the earth ; earthly things were the objects of his desires, and his wishes being chained down to this lower scene, he made no account of the glories of a heavenly inheritance. He served Mammon, and with the worship of Mammon the love of God cannot co-exist. In the text we have the remedy for this disease ; the virtue, of which the sin of covetousness is the defect ; the one and only remedy for the evil and corrupt tendencies of our nature. We have desires implanted in us by ALMIGHTY GOD, which call for some object upon which they may be exercised, and in default of those which are agreeable to the mind and purpose of the Most High, and to the exclusion of these, the great enemy of souls is ever and anon seeking to supply us with pursuits unworthy our destiny, as immortal creatures, and derogatory to our dignity as the brethren of the Only Begotten. The Beatitude which we are now about to consider, sets before us what should be the one aim of our lives ; and may God give us grace to so consider it, that we may be among the number of those happy and satisfied ones of whom it speaks.

In determining the first branch of our inquiry, viz., the persons who are here pronounced blessed ; we shall have to ascertain, first, the meaning of the

word righteousness, and then what it is to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

This word righteousness is one which frequently occurs in Scripture, but not always in the same sense. Strictly speaking, it is a forensic term, and has reference to the legal discharge of persons suffering under the imputation of some crime or fault. If the accused be a criminal, this discharge is effected by the remission of his guilt, if he be innocent, by the declaration of his innocence. In this latter sense, no man can be justified or accounted righteous; we are justified, not as innocent persons, but as sinners, and accordingly we are not acquitted but pardoned. Then again, righteousness is a term used of that just judgment, which God shall execute when in the end of time He shall assign to all their portion in the world to come, in accordance with their probation in this life present. Righteousness, in a moral sense, may be supposed to signify those Divine and moral virtues, which are required by the Christian Law, and are the work of the Good Spirit of God within us, comprising the whole duty of man to God, to his neighbour and to himself. And this righteousness may be further considered, to consist either in the bare actions themselves, or in their display in man's life, or in the habitual will of doing these actions. But it would be beside our present purpose to enter upon the wide inquiry into which this word, in all its bearings, would lead us.

The righteousness which is intended in the text

would seem to be of two kinds. First, inherent, and then imputed. The inherent is imperfect, and proportioned to our state, consisting in the mortifying of sins and lusts, and, in some degree, of new and holy life ; the imputed is CHRIST'S Righteousness, accepted as ours, which is, in plain words, the pardon of our sins, and the acceptation of our persons in CHRIST.

With regard to this latter righteousness, it is supposed to be already conveyed to those to whom the blessing of my text reaches, for these graces which we are considering, are Christian graces, and are to be displayed in the life of Christians. Christians are they who are in CHRIST ; and those who are in CHRIST are acquitted in the court of heaven. In His Well Beloved, God sees nothing but that which is well pleasing in His sight, and therefore in such as are in HIM, God sees nothing distasteful, nothing obnoxious to His displeasure. In Holy Baptism we are justified ; the sentence of outlawry, which was by birth upon us, has been reversed ; we are no longer aliens from the heavenly country ; we are forgiven for JESU'S sake ; and by His spotless Obedience, issuing in the one full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction of the Cross, we are members of CHRIST, children of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. For this imputed righteousness, then, in the sense of our first trial at God's judgment bar, on account of our original corruption, Christians have not to be desirous, they

already have it ; but then we must always remember that this justification is the admission to a state and relation of forgiveness. And in that without shedding of blood there is no remission ; in that none can claim the forgiveness of sins, nor any receive it, save as a portion of the boundless merits of the SAVIOUR, it follows that there is still a sense in which this imputed righteousness of CHRIST may be longed for by the Christian. He needs it to mingle with his repentance for his daily falls—for his own sorrow cannot save him—nor can any fruit of his body atone for the sin of his soul.

In respect of inherent righteousness, we must consider that which is here declared to be the subject of our desires, to be that habit of goodness and holiness, which is, in the regenerate, the fruit of the good Spirit of God, and which manifests itself in the conquest of temptation, and the avoiding of sin ; or if sin be committed, shows itself in bitterness of spirit, and true contrition and amendment of life ; and which day by day adds grace to grace, and is known by the presence of some fresh token of resemblance to the Perfect Example of our sinless LORD.

With regard to hungering and thirsting, these words may both be taken to express appetite or desire ; and in this case may apply to both these kinds of righteousness, and would indicate that craving for holiness and pardon which recognises their necessity to life and strength, and refreshment.

Or we may separate the terms, and consider them in reference to each kind of righteousness.

Thus, hungering is an earnest appetite or desire for food, and here, in a spiritual sense, is appropriated to that first kind of righteousness which we understand by God's sanctifying grace, and which is, as it were, bread to the soul, to sustain it from perishing eternally. So, hungering after righteousness is an eager, impatient, and unsatisfiable desire of grace, of sanctity to the soul, a desire not simply of the will, but of the life; a desire manifested in obedience, and accompanied with prayer and importunity to God, in order to obtain it.

Then thirsting, as being a desire for moisture to refresh, would apply itself to that second kind of righteousness, which consists in pardon of sin. This is the refreshing of the panting soul mortally wounded, and so like the hart, it longs for the water brooks to allay the fever consequent upon the wound, and to quench the flame of a scorching conscience. Thus thirsting after righteousness is a most earnest desire of pardon, with prayer for it to God in CHRIST, and the never giving over that importunity until HE be inclined to have mercy.

And here we may see in few words, wherein the blessing of those who thus hunger and thirst after righteousness consists; they shall be filled; they shall be satisfied. This is a blessing, which has a present and a future fulfilment.

Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness

shall be satisfied *here*. Not that they shall here receive the full fruition of immortal beings; that would be impossible until the unrepealed penalty of death shall have been put on one side, the last enemy destroyed in the Coming of the Son of Man. But as hunger and thirst, when the means of satisfying them are at hand are pleasurable feelings, as they are indicative of bodily health and strength, so to hunger and thirst after righteousness is the sign of health and life in the Christian. He is satisfied day by day with the pleasures of God's House; he has that which his present appetites desire; he grows in appetite for heavenly food; to the milk of babes succeeds the strong meat of the full grown; and though he has not daily increasing desires, but finds his continual solace in the same accustomed food, yet since for this he has ever the relish which no condiment save hunger can supply, this food mingles with his inner life, he is sustained, and strengthened by it. And since none here can attain to maturity, he is satisfied day by day, in such sort, that new vigour is the consequence of his being daily filled, and he goes on from strength to strength, until the day when he shall appear before the God of gods in Zion, and then shall he learn the full intensity of this glorious Beatitude; they *shall be filled*.

Here he shall learn how HE alone is sufficient for the soul Who made it. Here he shall learn that nothing less than God is adequate to the happiness of man. Here he shall learn how he

who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is filled; filled with the peace of mind which shuts out carking cares and cankering anxieties; filled with the contentment which sweetens every trial, and makes to overflow every cup of joy; filled with that sense of possession and enjoyment which never dwells long upon the objects of worldly desire; so filled and satisfied as to exclude that restive gnawing to which ambition is subject, and which finds no abatement even in the attainment of its ends, and shut out that burning heat which riches and power ridicule but do not satisfy. Even in this life the man who makes righteousness the object of his longings shall be filled, but it is reserved for heaven, and for the Presence of the LORD JEHOVAH, to complete all that is wanting in that promise: "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."¹ "Whosoever eateth of the Bread which came down from heaven shall live for ever."² In this life present there is satisfaction for all, that a state of grace capacitates us for; but it is itself the training for a state of glory, and it is there that these larger desires shall have their full satisfaction.

Proportionably to the two parts of appetite, the state of glory is full matter of satisfaction to each. There is perfect holiness without mixture of infirmity or carnality, answering to the hungering after inherent righteousness, and there is perfect free pardon and acquittal from all the guilt and debt of sin, by

¹ St. John iv. 14.

² St. John vi. 51.

which the thirst of imputed righteousness is satisfied. Yea, there is that vision of God which is happiness in its highest and most unalloyed sense ; for there shall the creature be filled with the CREATOR, and GOD be all in all.

And now let us inquire, how did the Son of Man merit the blessedness of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and how did HE receive the blessing ?

For imputed righteousness, HE Who was sinless could not thirst, and yet HE did desire it for the race HE came to redeem. HE did submit to that which was its sign and mark under the elder covenant. HE also laboured for their perfectness, and most earnestly did HE desire their pardon.

And seeing that it was to be the reward of His obedience, and that it was for the glory that was set before HIM, that HE endured the cross, despising the shame ; we may without straining the sense of the words before us say, that our gracious LORD did thirst for pardon ; HE thirsted that the sins which were laid upon HIM might be blotted out ; that the hand-writing which was in ordinances might be taken away ; and that principalities and powers might be made a show of openly, by His triumphing over them in His Cross. In this sense none ever so thirsted for righteousness as HE, and none was ever so filled. HE sought pardon not for HIMSELF, but for countless millions of sinning men. HE desired to take in His loving embrace all the families of the earth, and

His aim was to reconcile God and man in His Cross, slaying the enmity by His Death. What were all His humiliations, what His sufferings, His buffetings, His scourging, His cruel mocking, His submitting to be betrayed by one disciple, and denied by another? What His faintness, His weariness, His agony, His sense of spiritual desertion, His dying a malefactor's death? What were all these but so many infallible proofs that HE thirsted for the pardon of the human race; that HE desired the sweetness of God's favour should be tasted by man? If HE had at any moment ceased to thirst for this righteousness wherein man may see God and live; if HE had ever wavered in His purpose, ever ceased to desire this draught of God's forgiveness, HE would have taken leave of all His ignominy and pain, and sorrow: the glories of His transfiguration would have been perpetual; the benedictions of His Baptism "This is My beloved SON in Whom I am well pleased," would have received no contradiction in the dark hour of a SAVIOUR'S dying, for HE needed not to suffer and endure except for our sakes. It was a thirst for pardoning righteousness which agonized HIM in Gethsemane; and wrung from HIM on Calvary the piercing cry which an unheeding throng, forgetful of the language of the divine Psalmist, mistook for an invocation of Elias. Yea, when, in order that it might be fulfilled, HE said, "I thirst;" it was the yearning of His soul, the desire of His heart, that GOD would have mercy

upon Zion, of which the dryness and exhaustion of His parched frame was the expression.

But if we turn from the desire of imputed righteousness which belonged to our LORD only as HE exercised it on behalf of human nature, to consider His desire of inherent righteousness ; we find HIM in His own proper person hungering and thirsting thereafter. It was His meat and His drink to do the will of GOD. For this end was HE born, and for this came HE into the world, that HE might bear witness to the truth. For the conquest of sin, HE required no grace : for the stirring up of repentance, HE had no need ; no lusts had HE to quench ; desire in HIM was lighted at no earthly fire ; and yet because HE had a truly human will, energizing in a truly human body ; neither the perfection of the will, nor the perfection of the body excluded, but rather presupposed, growth and the presence of temptation. It was for growth, that grace was necessary, and for temptation there is needed the strength of the HOLY SPIRIT in order to conquest. Righteousness then, in the sense of a habit and desire of holiness, and the strength to fulfil all the requirements of obedience, was a proper object of desire by the human will of CHRIST our LORD.

And HE did seek it as none other of the sons of men have sought it. HE came not forth upon this our world in the full stature of manhood ; HE came not down upon this our earth in all the perfections of our nature fully developed ; as was the case with our first

parents in their original creation. No, H^E came to save our nature, and by the *healing* of His own All-holy flesh, H^E sanctified that nature from the very first. Infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, have all the virtue which goeth out from His sacred Body. H^E entered upon this lower scene in the helplessness of His manger cradle. On the eighth day from His Nativity, began his hungering and thirsting after righteousness; so early testimony gave H^E to the great truth, that without shedding of blood is no remission, and at this the appointed time according to the Jewish law, was His human nature brought into covenanted relations of Righteousness with the All-holy God. Forty days from this same Nativity, was H^E presented in the temple, in token of His dedication to the LORD of righteousness. During twelve years H^E learned obedience in the home of His earthly parents, hungering and thirsting after righteousness in that quiet all-prevailing mode which most commends itself to God according to His own after words, "not every one that saith unto ME, LORD, LORD, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he which doeth the will of My FATHER that is in heaven." And when at twelve years old, His faithful parents took H^{IM} with them on the occasion of their going up according to annual custom to Jerusalem to the Feast, H^E did not return with them when they set out on their outward journey, but lingered in the Catechetical school of the Jewish Doctors, hun-

gering and thirsting after that will of God which HE chose to learn according to the conditions of His humanity, that so in all things HE might be our Example. And then when His mother sought HIM sorrowing, and found HIM rejoicing, HE went down with her, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto His earthly parents. What hungering and thirsting after righteousness is there in this subjection of the CREATOR to His creatures; obedience is the ordained mode of increase in knowledge, and in wisdom, and in grace. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."¹ And accordingly we read that while JESUS thus practised obedience, "HE increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and man." Wondrous economy of man's redemption! HE Who was before all things had increase in time, HE Who was His FATHER's well Beloved, yet grew in God's favour. We may not seek to scan these words too closely. Suffice it for us to know that our JESUS did hunger and thirst after righteousness and was filled. HE had desires for that grace which HE should be able, when HE had HIMSELF received it, to pour down in abundant fulness upon His chosen.

When thirty years are passed, HE enters upon His everlasting Priesthood amid the anointing of the HOLY SPIRIT in Jordan. Designate to the office from the womb HE now appears before men the CHRIST, and

¹ St. John vii. 17.

straightway HE hungers and thirsts after righteousness. HE Who was to be made perfect through sufferings is led by the SPIRIT into the wilderness to be tempted in His forty days' fast. Here we have the mysteriousness of His human obedience again forced upon us. HE Who had no sin to mortify, had yet a will to which pleasure was an object of desire, and pain an object of dread ; and this will needed the discipline of privation to teach it endurance. How intense was His self-discipline ! How earnest was His Prayer, and it was not in vain. HE hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and neither sensual mistrust, nor worldly ambition, nor spiritual presumption, could find a place, where the desire was wholly set on righteousness. And how shall we follow our LORD in His hungering and thirsting after righteousness through His earthly ministry ? HE lived not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. HE lived not to do His own will, but the will of HIM that sent HIM. In prayer, in teaching, in watching, in words of mercy, and in deeds of love, in pureness, in patience, in longsuffering, in increasing acknowledgment that as a Man HE walked in dependence on Divine grace, supplied not immediately from the Divine GODHEAD in union with His human nature, but by the HOLY SPIRIT which proceedeth from HIM and from the FATHER in eternal procession, in holiness, and in love, and in suffering, did HE ever hunger and thirst after righ-

teousness. HE desired it as HE journeyed by the way-side, as HE sojourned in the mountain, and as HE knelt by the pale moonlight in nature's stillest solitude. Amid the busy haunts of men too; in the temple, and in the judgment hall, in the public mart, and the crowded feast, to commend HIMSELF in unswerving obedience to His FATHER, this was the one object of our SAVIOUR's earthly life. For righteousness did HE hunger; for righteousness did HE thirst: yea, when in HIM the true Passover was to be slain; when the LAMB of GOD to whom all former sacrifices had pointed, was in very deed to be offered up, and not a bone of HIM broken, even to the last HE leads His Disciples by the way of GOD's commandments. HE partaketh with them of the last Supper, gives new significance to the Cup of blessing, and departs singing with them the accustomed hymn of Jewish praise, the "Great Hallel," as the Paschal Song was from its many hallelujahs called.

And was not HE Who thus hungered and thirsted after righteousness, Whose dying words implored the application of forgiveness, which His dying conformity obtained, was HE not filled?

Yea, is HE not JESUS CHRIST the Righteous? Does HE not stand in virtue of His everlasting Priesthood, the righteousness of all His ransomed. HE hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and HE was filled. HE alone of all mankind is righteous, and there is none offence in HIM. HE has

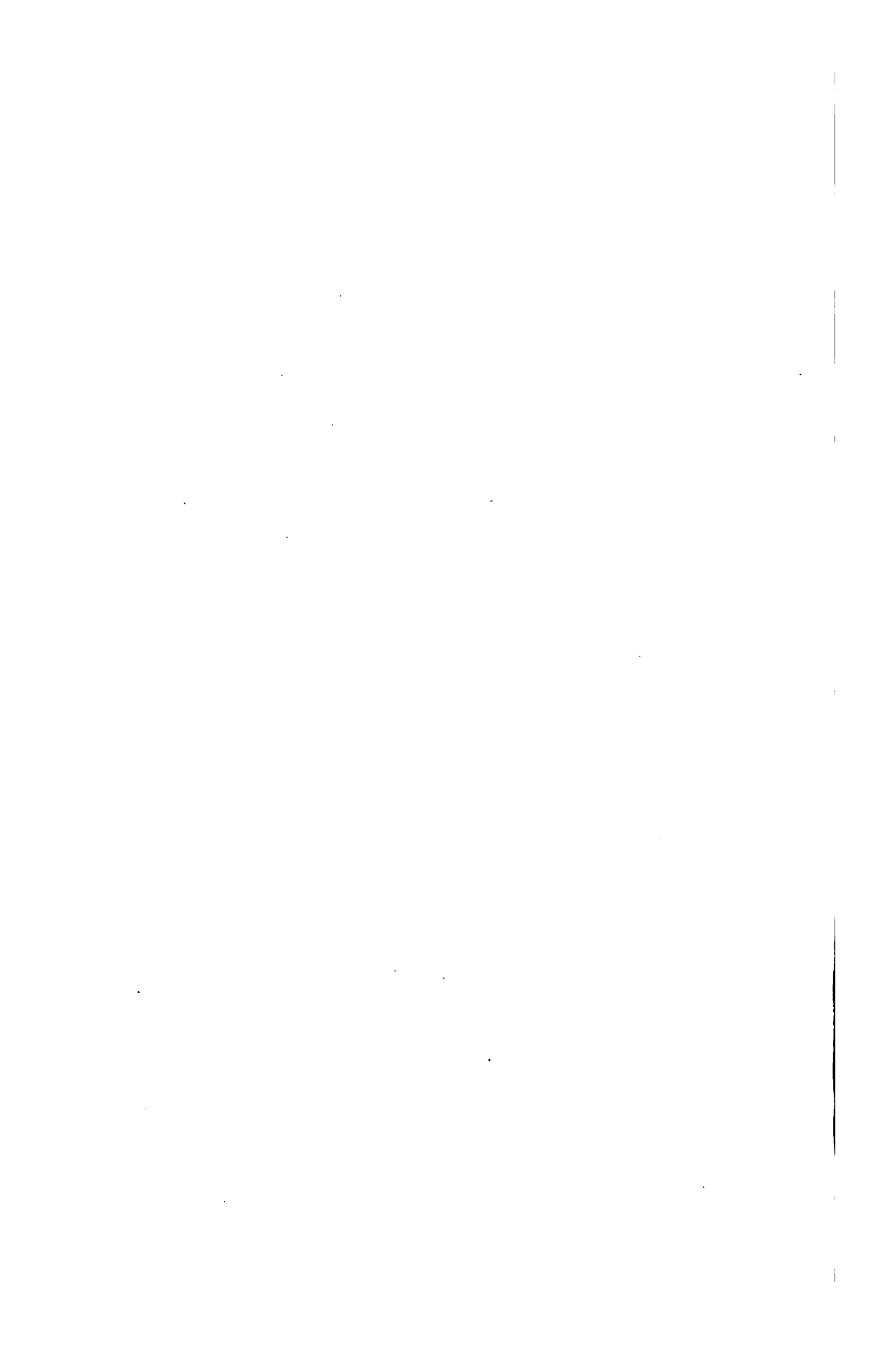
rendered a perfect, an unsinning obedience. So filled was H ϵ , so satisfied was His hunger and thirst, that in H IM every jot and tittle of the Divine law was obeyed. H ϵ rendered an obedience as perfect in kind, as it was universal in extent. In H IM was no unrighteousness, but in H IM was the perfection of all obedience, and H ϵ saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied; H ϵ was satisfied with the assurance of pardon conveyed to the race H ϵ became Incarnate to save. H ϵ was filled in that all that is incomplete in man, is made abundant in H IM . The law has been fulfilled. Divine Justice has been appeased. Holiness has been found in man. From the hem of His sacred garment, from each ordinance of His richly dowered Church, goes there forth a holy and a healing virtue. In H IM is the righteousness wherein the saints are clothed. Of H IM come the white robes, and the victorious palm. His mark in the forehead of His redeemed, is their sign of meetness for the Divine Presence. Of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace. None now need ever hunger and thirst, and not be filled. From His boundless merits, there goeth forth sanctification in all the sinning race of Adam. Of H IM cometh upon all His members, through the HOLY SPIRIT, with which His human nature is in unmeasured fulness replete, release from sin and advancement in the ways of holiness. Yea, filled with all fulness, H ϵ now stands our Intercessor at God's right hand. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate

with the FATHER, JESUS CHRIST the Righteous.”¹ What consolation is there in those words, JESUS CHRIST the Righteous. HE is righteous, and we are His members ; keep we our lot and portion in HIM : preserve we our hold in His Incarnation : and then GOD seeing not us who are weak and sinful, but JESUS CHRIST, Who is strong, and righteous, of His salvation we shall in all abundance receive, and in the glory of His saints shall there be yet further honour done unto HIM Who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.

But then, in order to have part and parcel in the righteousness of JESUS our LORD, we ourselves must hunger and thirst after righteousness. We must make our own the teaching of the wise man. “ My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee ; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding ; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding ; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”² We must cultivate the feeling which prompted the Psalmist to exclaim, “ O that my ways were so direct that I might keep Thy statutes !”³ We must not only walk in holy ways, but find our pleasure therein. The blessing of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness is not en-

¹ 1 S. John ii. 1.² Proverbs ii. 1—5.³ Psalm cxix. 5.

joyed, save by those who set themselves in earnest about the work of their salvation. None can hunger and thirst after righteousness, but they who realize their need of a SAVIOUR. Would any have this blessing, let them be diligent in self-examination. Let them put aside all the poisonous sweetmeats of this world which cloy the spiritual appetite, but furnish no lasting strength; nay, which by deadening the spiritual appetite, shut out the only wholesome food of immortal beings. Probe well your ways: ponder deeply on God's holiness; be inflamed with a sense of all God in the flesh has done and suffered for you. Imitate your LORD's burning zeal: His fervent charity; His meek trust; His poverty of spirit; feel yourselves poor, and miserable, and naked. Hunger and thirst after righteousness, deny yourselves; frequent holy ordinances; prepare for them. Thus only can you truly desire them; thus only can you hope to hunger and thirst for them, and thus only can you hope to be filled.



SERMON V.

PEACEMAKERS THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD.

ST. MATTHEW V. 10.

“BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY SHALL BE
CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD.”

WE come to-day in strict keeping with the thoughts which are about us in our journey towards Calvary, to consider the Beatitude which pronounces the happiness of those who make peace. For do we not to-day commemorate the giving of the Promise of the Comforter, and the conferring of Peace by our LORD upon His Apostles, in the memorable benediction of Peace, which we find in St. John xiv. ? Nay, is not this the Day on which the SAVIOUR gave His New Commandment to His Disciples, that they should love one another ? And, above all, and before all, is not this the day on which HE instituted His Sacrament of Love, and made the Oblation of His Body and Blood ; that Offering of HIMSELF as a piacular Victim, which begun to-day,

was slain on the morrow, and was accepted by the FATHER in the Resurrection, and completed in the Ascension? But before passing on to consider the appropriateness of this beatitude, as a subject of meditation on Maunday Thursday, it may just be remarked, in reference to what was said in the opening lecture, as to the completeness of the number, and the dependence of the order of these beatitudes; that as it is fitting that the pure in heart should be reminded how their own peace should be shed abroad upon others; so it is well that the peacemakers should be taught that there are circumstances perfectly compatible with Divine favour, which yet are not circumstances of peace, and that the disciples of HIM Who came not to send peace, but a sword, should know that peace is only then desirable when it comes of the triumph of truth. We may also note, that since this Beatitude stands seventh in order, there is much to be commended in the temper which sees, in that fact, a correspondence with, and intimation of, the sabbatical repose which makes the seventh period in the Divine economy.

As respects the Beatitude itself, it is one particularly deserving our attention in these troublous times, when amid wars, and rumours of wars, we have not been wholly without apprehension, that we might ourselves become involved in the general commotion.

Let us, as far as we are concerned, be watchful of

ourselves, and take care that no word or act of ours shall do otherwise than promote the general safety ; let us be very careful that there is not that in our daily lives, which is a daily provocation of the Majesty which sitteth between the Cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet ; nor a disregard of that LORD, Who is King, be the people never so impatient. The King's power loveth judgment, Thou hast prepared equity : Thou hast executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob. Be it ours to do justly ; to walk humbly ; to desire peace ; to be faithful in the land ; and God's Eye shall be upon us, and we shall dwell with HIM.

And now, brethren, who are they that are pronounced blessed, when the peacemakers are said to be so ? The words "making peace," in Holy Scripture, refer not only to making peace between man and man, but between man and God. Further, the notion of making, in the same sacred volume, belongs to an inclination of the soul ; as, to "make a lie," is to be given to lying ; to practise that sin ; to be set upon it ; so to do, (which, in the original, is to make,) "righteousness and sin" denotes the full bent and inclination of the soul to either of them. And in the same sense, to "make peace," both here, and in that passage of the Apostle James, where the fruit of righteousness is said to be "sown in peace of them that make peace," is to have strong and hearty affections to peace. Now the peacemaker may display the strength and heartiness of his

affections in various ways. He will follow it, and ensue it in respect, both of private and of public life; he will maintain it where it exists, and seek to restore it where it is lost.

Many Christian graces are necessary to the presence and exercise of this peaceableness. To be peaceable, a man must be free from inordinate self-love, from covetousness, from ambition and envy, from revenge, and from the dominion of the lusts which war in our members. The peacemaker must supply the absence of these vices, by the presence of the charity that seeketh not her own, of the generosity which sets a man above the ordinary occasions of quarrel; of the humility and modesty which beget contentment and thankfulness; the kindness which thinks no evil; the mildness and meek forgiveness which forbear the aggravation of strife; and of that self-government, without which, the passions become our masters, and we their slaves.

Let us apply these characteristics of the peacemaker to the several particulars under which we have supposed him to manifest this his bent and inclination.

And as to private peace. The peacemaker controls anger and covetousness. The former tempts and disquiets families; the latter disturbs neighbourhoods. The angry man will have no peace with his servants, his children, and even wife and parents; indeed, any and all that are within the reach of his conversation, will experience his ill temper. The

covetous man will contend with all those about him who have anything which he desires. The peacemaker has a charitable and favourable opinion of all men and all actions that are capable of a candid interpretation ; for nothing so foment quarrels as jealousies, and unjust suspicions. Thirdly, he will cultivate an open and ingenuous bearing in any matters which may be the subject of debate, laying bare in their just proportions whatever may be the subject of difference, or may have so fallen out as to be liable to misconstruction ;—he will further prefer an amicable settlement to a contentious litigation, submitting in smaller matters to loss, and in greater seeking arbitration rather than that brother should go to law against brother. Lastly, he will let his dislike of flatterers, whisperers, and backbiters be unequivocally known ; and not suffer the malice and discontent of such to influence or alter his affections.

In regard to public peace, the peacemaker will so cherish contentment with his present condition, as to be averse to what can only be gained at the expense of some great public change or innovation. To his rulers in Church and state, he will render a cheerful and willing obedience ; and will prefer to suffer private wrong rather than to involve a state in confusion to rid himself of immediate pressure ; yea, when it is too obvious to be gainsaid that rulers are acting unjustly, and that governors are oppressing wrongfully ; his first effort will be to

remember that the faults and infirmities of those in high station are by God permitted for the punishment of the people, and that consequently our first concern should be with ourselves, to discover wherein we have provoked God's vengeance, and our first prayer, "LORD, give us wisdom to amend what is amiss within us, and there will be less to amend without us."

In the matter of religious faith, the peacemaker will be very careful so to express, and so to demean himself, as to show that it is the error and not the person of the heretic or schismatic which he deems to be the subject of his censure. And in all that vast range of subjects, on which men may hold different opinions, without questioning the fundamentals of the faith, he will be careful not so to mistake the value and importance of what at best, are only the opinions of private men, as to make them the pretexts for denying either salvation or communion to those that differ from himself. Especially will he be careful to avoid adopting the badges of party, or of investing opinions with notes of sanctity, so as to reckon those the best men who view matters most exactly with himself. Neither will he seek for definitive determination on too many points, but will be wisely content to believe that there is a pervading law of unity. The wisdom which blends the prismatic colours into light, and makes all oneness to consist in the combination of numbers, as the body of many members, will be found

to have so ordered it that the harmony of His Divine Kingdom shall consist more in mutual forbearance than absolute identity. Much mischief has in all ages of the world arisen from men insulating themselves within the fences of their own opinions, whether referring to Church or State; and the disinclination to see any good in those who do not pronounce our shibboleth, has led to untold discussion, and the most painful heart-burnings. Now, men are ready to admit this is wrong by their practice in hours of common danger. Attacks there are, made upon what is felt to be common to all, which knit as it were in a moment contending parties into one common army for the defence of the common weal; and if in such seasons there were only the practice of more forbearance and more candour, we might hope to see the peaceful unanimity within of longer duration than the existence of the immediate pressure from without. The peacemaker therefore will be very careful to maintain whatever of peace does exist; he will guard it with all the jealousy with which he would protect the most valued possession; aware of the extreme difficulty of preserving it, he will watch it most jealously, he will seek to overcome evil attacks upon it with good, and will be most earnest in his prayers to God the Author of Peace, for the continuance of His choice gift among us. And when, for and by the sins of any, peace succeeds

not, the peacemaker will humble his soul, and amend his life, searching out what particular sin it is which has made the blessing of peace beyond our attainment, and so make that peace with God, without which there can be no lasting peace among men, and will be most urgent in his supplications that HE Who doth not willingly afflict the children of men would be graciously pleased to restore to us the forfeited blessing.

And next, what is the blessing which is promised to the peacemakers? It is that in some high and emphatic sense, "they shall be called the children of God." Sonship to the CREATOR of the Universe is in a certain sense the heritage of all the creatures of His hand; and in virtue of His creating us, God also preserves us all, but HE is more especially the FATHER of some, in that HE is the God of that peace which is established by HIM Who hath made peace in the Blood of His Cross. The blessedness of the peacemakers consists in being in an especial manner the children of the God of Peace, and in this blessedness is included both temporal and eternal happiness.

Here, the peacemaker has that present peace and rest which, like health in the body, is the foundation of all other superstructures of temporal joy. He has also the satisfaction which comes of making others happy, and the honour of being like unto those blessed angels in sacred meditation upon whose

harmony in this blessed attribute, the saintly Hooker passed within the veil.¹ Yea, the peacemaker is not only like unto the angels of God, but in this he also resembles GOD HIMSELF, Whose child therefore by the presence of His grace, he comes to be called.

Hereafter, the peacemakers shall be rewarded with all the privileges of those who have the ETERNAL for their FATHER; to him shall be conveyed pardon of sin and everlasting rest and felicity in the region of order and of happiness.

And now, beloved, we come to inquire how the Son of Man merited and received the blessing of the Peacemaker. To pronounce this blessing was well worthy of HIM Who was born into this our world in that quiet and peaceful condition of the Roman Empire when Augustus, in token of an universal peace, had shut up the mystical gates of Janus; and none so fulfilled the conditions of the Peacemaker as HIMSELF thus become the Son of Man.

When God became man, angels, admitted to a vision of the mystery of the Incarnation, saw how between earth and heaven there was war no longer, and they sang their triumphal and joyous anthem of "Peace on earth," in celebration of the good-will

¹ "That he was meditating on the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven; and oh that it might be so on earth!"—*Isaac Walton's Life of Hooker*.

now manifested from God towards men. And when all being accomplished, our LORD was about to go away, Peace was His parting benediction : "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." And the conduct which filled up the interval between His birth and His ascension, was one and the same throughout. HE had that willing obedience which made peace in the home of the Virgin mother ; and when HE came forth upon His ministry, the Dove which anointed HIM to His threefold office, was the fit emblem of the loving temper of HIM, Who saw in all that did the will of His FATHER in heaven, His brethren, His sisters, and His mother. And what was His errand into this world ? It was to make peace between sinning man and his offended God. We must then regard the whole life of our LORD,—the whole course of His unsinning obedience, as one continued act of the peacemaker ; and while this is the aspect of His life towards God, it was the character of His teaching in respect of man.

What virtue is there which tends to peace, that is not found in the code of the Son of Man ? Where shall there be peacemaking, if not among those who act upon the Divine precepts : "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would

borrow turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you : that ye may be the children of your FATHER which is in heaven : for HE maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.¹ Yea, HE was HIMSELF in all things the pattern, no less than the teacher. When did HE Who bid His disciples be at peace one with another, forbidding them to strive for pre-eminence, avenge HIMSELF ? HE came forth to teach when sects and parties ran high in the Jewish Church ; but HE allied not HIMSELF either with Sadducees or Pharisees : if HE condemned the hypocrisy of the one, HE chided the unbelief of the other. Great was the popular discontent under the tyranny of the Roman yoke, but in HIM faction found no leader ; sedition no fomentor. To those who would take HIM and make HIM a king, HE taught that His kingdom was not of this world. When they would have gained His sanction for refusing taxes to their temporal rulers, the money which for their own convenience they used was made by its superscription to pronounce the condemnation of such as would withhold from Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. HE would not allow existing corruptions, great though

¹ St. Matt. v. 38—45.

they were, even so great as to merit the denunciation of woe upon those by whom they were brought in, to detract from the allegiance due to those who sat in Moses' seat. The hateful "Corban," whereby the peace of homes was disturbed, received His stern condemnation, and no escape was allowed from the force of that great Peacemaker, "Honour thy father and thy mother," comprising, as in its fulness it does, every form of that obedience and subjection, apart from which peace cannot reign. When over-forward disciples would avenge His wrongs upon offending Samaritans, He tells them they know not what manner of spirit they are of, and will not suffer anger to arise. He pays the unjustly demanded tribute-money by a miracle, rather than afford a pretext for civil insubordination. Conscious of no wrong against the temporal power; free from the guilt of any offence against the law; He yet suffers HIMSELF to be apprehended by the officers of that law: nor would He suffer those who were with Him to draw the sword with which but a little before, He told them it was now necessary they should provide themselves. And when one, over-zealous, had struck a servant of the high Priest's, and smote off his ear, Jesus said unto him, "Put up again thy sword into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."¹ It was not that He was powerless in that hour; His hand was in mercy stretched forth to heal the

¹ St. Matt. xxvi. 51, 52.

wound, and in meekness HE avowed that twelve legions of angels were at His command, but that so the Holy Scriptures would not be fulfilled. When taken into the Judgment Hall, HE resented not the indignities which were done HIM. HE did not even claim the punishment of those who wrongly smote HIM. No word or act escaped HIM which could raise an impediment to the course of lawful authority by the interference of external force ; though it was an innocent man who was condemned to die, and the witness of those who accused HIM agreed not together. And the life which had been spent in owning and acknowledging good wherever it might appear ; the life whose acts were such as having called an Apostle from the publican's gainful seat ; bringing salvation to Zaccheus' house ; accepting hospitality from Simon, the leper ; forgiving the woman that was a sinner ; reminding the accusers of the woman taken in adultery, that whatever might be her blame, they were not without sin ; the life of love which rewarded the faith of the nobleman, and which at the well rose superior to the prejudices which forbad intercourse with the Samaritan woman ; gave benediction to the Syro-Phenician stranger, and thus preached peace to them that were afar off ; this Life thus spent in teaching and practising peace, was not brought to a close without that mysterious prayer, which forms the burthen of the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, in which HE pleads the accomplishment of the work

which the FATHER had given HIM to do, and prays HIM to glorify HIM with His own Self with the glory which HE had with the FATHER before the world began, praying that His Apostles may be one in the Unity which HE has with His own co-essential and eternal FATHER: and that through the unity of the Apostolate, there may be oneness among all who call upon His Name. HE had summed up the commandments into the two grand duties of the love of God, for His own sake, and the love of man for God's sake: and HE goes not forth to give the greatest of all proofs of His own love for man, the giving of His life for those HE loved, until HE gives again His new commandment, that His Disciples love one another, and institutes the Sacrament of love, wherein we may show forth His loving Death until HE come. And when HE had fulfilled in all its conditions, the law of peace, and had suffered an ignominious death, HE rose again from the grave, but to proclaim that law anew. "Peace be unto you," was His salutation to His assembled followers. And when HE was about to leave them His hands were lifted up in blessing, in token of the gracious promise which had been the balm of His parting words to His loved ones, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."¹

Thus, brethren, did the Son of Man merit the

¹ St. John xiv. 27.

blessings of the Peacemaker. H_E first became incarnate, that H_E might reconcile God to man ; His earthly life was spent in reconciling man with man ; and it is His perfect obedience which knits in One all the families of the earth, and all the Majesty and Goodness of heaven. And has not the Son of Man received the blessing of the Peacemaker ? Yea ; H_E Who in His everlasting GOD-HEAD was a SON from all eternity, through His obedience as the Peacemaker, has come to be called the Child of God in time. For human nature has H_E won sonship in the heavenly kingdom. Through H_{IM} it is, that we have come to be called the sons of GOD. Though Heir of all things, from everlasting, yet it was the reward of His human obedience that H_E should be exalted to the rank of the First Born, and as Man should stand at God's right hand, the place of honour and of dignity. And since One Who has our nature is thus in His human no less than His divine Being the SON of God, H_E has admitted us to the same rich inheritance. H_E has received this name of the SON of God, and it is His title both in heaven and earth. H_E received it from on high at His inauguration, in that His Incarnation was the work of the Peacemaker. H_E received it from the Centurion in His dying Agony, in that His Death was the consummation of that of which His Incarnation was the commencement. Yes, H_E Who came to make peace on earth ; H_E Who came to make God and man at one ;

Who came that from His sinless manhood might flow the grace which should mortify all that disturbs peace and makes contention; HE was called the SON of GOD at His Baptism, and again at His transfiguration. HE was owned to be such by apostate angels, as HE had been recognized already by those who yet retained their first estate. His bold Apostle made the confession of His Sonship, which is the Rock on which the Church is built. HE claimed that high title for HIMSELF when arraigned by those who challenged an admission of the truth. And in that hour which seemed to falsify the fact, a thief sought place in a kingdom which could only be the SON'S Inheritance, and from a heathen was wrung the confession—"Truly this was the SON of GOD." Thus, by subjects and by rebels; by friend and foe; by disciple and by alien; by HIMSELF, and by His FATHER, and by the HOLY GHOST; is HE, our anointed LORD, declared to have inherited and to have received the Blessing of the Peacemaker.

Be it ours so to live in all our daily life, that we may not forfeit that Sonship which is ours because it is His. Let us seek after, and strive after, and pray for that peace which is indispensable to the prosperity and good conduct of society; for as unity and coherence make everything strong, so peace is that which binds all together. "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand." Let us labour both in Church and State for that peace which is as much the ornament as it is the strength of those who ensue

it, and which has for its reward the true pleasure which the Psalmist portrays when he exclaims, "Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

The disposition which makes us meek and merciful, and poor in spirit, will make us of the number of those who make for peace; as assuredly will those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, be found to be those who thus earn the blessedness of being the children of God; for to set man at one again, to reduce all to the obedience of the One Will, which in the hour of primal order was the secret of harmony and peace in universal space; to bring men and angels, creature and CREATOR, ransomed and REDEEMER, the sinful and the SANCTIFIER, unto the affectionate peace and oneness of the loving children of a Parent with Whom is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning," this is the end and design of the Christian religion. Let us then rise to the dignity of kinsmen of the Great Peacemaker; and let us on this the day of love, attune our hearts to thoughts which shall make us welcome guests at the Feast of Love on Sunday next. Let all sin, all hatred, all envyings, all strife be cast out; let us show that we are the children of God, that One is our FATHER, even the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and let us do all that in us lies to win back for Christendom the admission from those external to our fold, that we are the disciples of the Crucified, in the wondering exclamation:—"See how these Christians love one another."

SERMON VI.

PRESENT SHAME, AND FUTURE GLORY.

ST. MATTHEW V. 10, 11, 12.

“BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS’ SAKE, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. BLESSED ARE YE WHEN MEN SHALL REVILE YOU, AND PERSECUTE YOU, AND SAY ALL MANNER OF EVIL AGAINST YOU FALSELY, FOR MY SAKE. REJOICE, AND BE EXCEEDING GLAD, FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN: FOR SO PERSECUTED THEY THE PROPHETS BEFORE YOU.”

AND NOW, beloved, as we have come to that most awful day on which was consummated the dire Passion of our Incarnate God, I propose that we should consider the last of the eight Beatitudes, as they stand in the Divine order of their first delivery. It is not without significance to the thoughtful mind, that this last or eighth Beatitude should speak of suffering, in strict agreement with that provision of the elder dispensation which required, that on the eighth day should infancy give its testimony to that true key to the doctrine of suffering, that “without shed-

ding of blood there is no remission." They are sad and subdued thoughts which should be about us to-day, as we betake ourselves into the deepest of the shadows of the Cross, and stand beholding the stupendous Sacrifice which the God-man CHRIST JESUS is offering to appease the wrath of a just and terrible God. And yet there is that which sustains us amid our sorrow, and gives endurance a reward amid the blackness of our grief: for that which was being wrought out in this tremendous hour of nature's agony, was effectual even to the achievement of our recovery to the favour of our God, and in that JESUS died, it is given to Christians to live. Let us then seek to have our faith strengthened, our love enkindled by the great things on this day accomplished, and thus shall our hope be sustained amid the trials of our earthly sojourn: and we shall learn, as the true disciples of the Crucified, to thankfully accept all suffering, and all obloquy, as a token that we are His, and shall not shrink from desiring the blessedness which is theirs, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

The Beatitude now under our consideration would appear to have been delivered in the first instance for the whole Church, and then applied particularly to those, His chosen twelve, who were so soon about to enter into the heritage of the prophets that were before them: but the iteration of the blessing furnishes us with so much insight into the actual condition which our LORD declares blessed,

that I have thought it well to read the three verses, as in fact one pronouncing of blessedness.

And who are they that are here pronounced blessed? 1. Those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake. 2. Those that are reviled falsely for the sake of CHRIST. And these two particulars wherein consists the title to the blessedness we are now considering, are so far identical, that the latter is included in the former, the one being a special word, describing one form of persecution, and the other the more general term. Persecution signifies, properly and strictly, the being pursued, and driven, and hunted, as is the custom with noxious beasts; but in its common use denotes whatever calamity or affliction the malice or tyranny of others can lay upon us. Of persecution, reviling is one special kind, and it is that kind too, which is most frequently the Christian's lot, because those that have no power to inflict other injuries, have yet the weapons of their malice always in readiness: then again, they who are not themselves acting up in any way to the standard of Christian duty, are apt in their own defence, as they think, to defame those who are: the good actions of such appear so reproachful to them, and so forcibly to reprove their own thoughts, that they endeavour by their tongues to revenge themselves, and to redeem their reputation by that means.

Persecution and reviling are ever the resort of persons who are not drawn under the obedience of

the Life of CHRIST; they are the manifestations of dispositions which are not influenced by the golden rule of Christian charity, and are the common delight of little minds and ungenerous spirits. And for the most part, those who are singled out for persecution, are innocent and unoffending persons; and those who excel in holiness are they against whom the wicked most love to direct their poisoned shafts.¹ Still there may be persecution, which though it draws a curse upon its instigators, yet entails no blessing upon those against whom it is directed; according to the ancient saying, "It is not the punishment which makes the martyr, but the cause of that punishment." And thus accordingly, our LORD does not say generally, "Blessed are the persecuted: Blessed are those that are reviled:" but, "Blessed are they which are persecuted *for righteousness' sake*:" "Blessed are those that are reviled *falsely for My sake*." Many, as we heard in the teaching of yesterday's evening lesson, may suffer justly; as thieves, as murderers, or as evil doers, or as busy bodies in other men's matters: to such no blessing attaches, on this account they do but suffer the just reward of their evil deeds; yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on that behalf. Now, this persecution for righteousness' sake, this being reproached for the Name of CHRIST, may arise either out of a demand that we should apostatize and deny

¹ "For slander's mark was ever yet the fair."—*Shakespear*.

our LORD, or it may spring out of some indifferent action, which though it be not done in necessary obedience to CHRIST, yet arising out of love to HIM, and being visited with persecution, may be supposed to belong to this matter. In this case, the persecution that so falls on the Christian, will be thought to be permitted by our wise and good God, and disposed or ordered by HIM for the beatitude of those who suffer, i. e. for their benefit as Christians, that they may not be condemned with the world, or as a means of trial, whether they will bear it patiently and christianly.

And as regards the demand to apostatize from, or deny CHRIST, this may arise in several ways. It needs not an age of actual martyrdom to train saints for a portion at least of the martyr's blessing. The man who will face obloquy, shame, contempt, the loss of friends, or of patrons, and submit patiently to blasted hopes and diminished fortunes, rather than make forfeit of one jot or tittle of the obedience he owes to His sovereign LORD, and who, because he is true to his allegiance to the Divine Majesty, is actually visited with these things, such an one is of the number of those who are "persecuted for righteousness' sake."

Again, if in the discharge of the necessary duties of our Christian calling, a line of action is required of us, which draws forth the imputation of unworthy motives, and surrounds us with charges from which our Christian temper recoils: if, because we pre-

fer to please God rather than men, and to consult our consciences rather than our ease, we are thereupon maligned and traduced; then if we have forborne so to act as to *give*, however unreasonably men may *take* offence, then may we patiently endure our reproach, in the hope that one day we shall receive the blessing of those that are reviled and spoken evil against falsely for the sake of CHRIST.

And what then is the blessing of those thus persecuted for righteousness and reviled for CHRIST's sake? Their's is the Kingdom of Heaven, or as if to guard against the conclusion that nothing more is intended than is pronounced of the poor in spirit, it is farther added, "*Great* is your reward in heaven." The opening blessing which our LORD pronounced was a title to the Kingdom of Heaven; and now HE admits us to the knowledge HE elsewhere confirms, that, in heaven there are degrees; that its many mansions are the types and emblems of many measures of glory; that as there is the Prophet's reward so is there the righteous man's reward.¹ It is the universal teaching of Holy Scripture, that God will render to every man according to his deeds, and that every one shall receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. And lest this should be referred to the general distribution of rewards and punishments, wherein the wicked shall receive their portion in the burning lake, and the good in the heavenly king-

¹ St. Matt. x. 41.

dom, it is more expressly said, "he that sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully." The same again is expressly represented under the Parable of the Talents committed to the management of servants; they were selected for specific rewards, according to the use they had severally made of their opportunities. And not to multiply other instances, such as apportionment of specific recompense to those who give a cup of cold water in CHRIST'S Name, and those who by having pity on the poor, lend to the LORD; we may remark, that a greater degree of blessedness is everywhere attributed to Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, their glorification being expressed by their "sitting down" in the kingdom of God, and that of the Saints by their sitting down with them, in allusion to the Eastern manner of feasting. This privilege of a more eminent seat is particularly assigned to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by our SAVIOUR, when HE tells us, that "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;" and so again to the Apostles—"Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed ME, in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones." Again, it is said that in glory, we shall be made like unto the angels; now the angels serve God in ranks of heavenly

¹ 2 Corin. ix. 6. ² St. Matt. viii. 11. ³ St. Matt. xix. 28.

thronedom, they have their orders and hierarchies, their thrones, principalities, and powers, their degrees of nearness to the Presence of God. And to this gradation in the future state of the blessed, our LORD points when HE tells us that for the persecuted and reviled Christian there is a great reward in heaven.

It is the thought of our own Jeremy Taylor, that over and besides the great crown which shall be on the heads of all faithful souls as kings to reign with CHRIST for ever, to special states, as to that of holy virginity, a little coronet or special reward shall be prepared.¹ And we may not doubt, that the noble army of Martyrs shall be known in the heavenly kingdom as those upon whom the King of Martyrs, and the more than Martyr, because a Sacrifice, shall have bestowed glories corresponding to and compensating for their low estate here.

Not that even here, the persecuted for righteousness' sake are without their consolation; already are they denizens of a heavenly kingdom, and are come to Mount Zion the city of the living God. They have herein the token, that the glory of God rests upon them; they are made partakers of CHRIST's Sufferings, and in their conformity to the ancient prophets, and God's true servants in all ages, they rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer shame for CHRIST's Name, and are glad in these unmistake-

¹ Holy Living, chap. II. sec. 3.

able tokens of sonship to that FATHER, Who has said "Whom the LORD loveth, HE chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom HE receiveth; if ye be without chastisement, then are ye bastards and not sons. Still no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous," and it is consolatory that there is set before us as the glory and reward which awaits those who shall practise endurance as the good soldiers of JESUS CHRIST, "great is their reward in Heaven."

And now we come to inquire how the Son of Man has merited and received the blessedness of the persecuted for righteousness' sake. And here let it be remembered that under one or other of the circumstances which constitute the being persecuted for righteousness' sake, every indignity laid upon the Man of Sorrows is drawn. Nothing was there in His all-holy Life which could give just occasion of offence to any; and whenever any act of His was visited with obloquy or contempt, it was for righteousness that HE was persecuted; it was because of the Truth that HE was reviled. If we except that nameless horror which consisted in the withdrawal of the Divine presence; when HE cried, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? and was cursed of God, seeing in HIM all the sin of a guilty world, what persecution did HE suffer which was not for righteousness' sake and falsely? And what a line of suffering is that, which, beginning in the flight into Egypt, because

¹ Hebrews xii. 6, 8, 11.

wicked men sought the young Child's life, was not drawn to its end until a distended and bleeding Victim the CHRIST hung upon the wood of shame a lifeless Sacrifice.

Wherefore became HE incarnate but to witness to the truth? What was all His earthly Life, but the casting forth upon the dark places of the earth the lights of a spotless obedience? HE HIMSELF was the Righteousness of God; and every persecution which was directed against HIM was for righteousness' sake. The kingdoms of the world travailed with the expectation of a Deliverer; and when our Emmanuel—JEHOVAH our Righteousness was born, and a star led worshipping Magi to inquire "where is HE Who is born King of the Jews?" Herod the King was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. And the King sought to destroy the infant JESUS. The wise men being warned of God, returned not to Herod; whereupon seeing that "he was mocked of the wise men, he was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men."¹ And though warned in a dream, that Herod would seek the young Child to destroy HIM; Joseph had taken the Child and His Mother into Egypt, and so the persecution reached not unto HIM to hurt HIM; yet against HIM was it directed, and thus early was

¹ St. Matt. ii. 16.

HE hunted out and pursued with relentless fury. It was because HE came to establish righteousness for the sons of men, and so could not accomplish the work HE had to do in concert and agreement with the world whose maxims HE came to set at nought ; that HE had not where to lay His head, and was ever and anon hungered, and weary, and athirst, and faint. Hardly had HE ventured upon His ministry, than His baptizing and making more disciples than John, though HE HIMSELF did not baptize, but His disciples, excited the jealousy of the Pharisees, and HE was hunted out of Judea to go up and down in Galilee, where the power of His persecutors was not so great ; and in despised Nazareth, and lowly Capernaum, HE exercised that ministry which persecution suffered HIM not to carry on unmolested in Judea.

When HE heals a leper, the fame of His miracle draws down anew the malice of His persecutors, and it is only in the desert, that HE can find a refuge. HE enters no more openly into the cities, but is driven to be without in desert places, and in His retirement, is sought only by those who desire His works of healing. His disciples pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath day ; on the Sabbath day HE heals the infirmity of a diseased daughter of Israel ; and HE is charged with breaking that law which HE came to fulfil. HE relieves the demoniacs from the cruel possession which was their torment, and confederacy with Beelzebub is alleged against HIM :

“This man casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.” H_E performs a miracle of bounty at a marriage feast; H_E makes not forfeit of the opportunities for bringing men under the influence of His doctrine, which the social entertainments whether of the rich Pharisee, or the just Publican afford, and H_E is called “a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a Friend of publicans and sinners.” H_E permits not His disciples to fast while yet the Bridegroom is with them, and His enemies charge H_IM, Who during forty days kept His strict fast in the wilderness, and whose chief meat it was to do the will of God, and Who lived not more by bread than by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; H_IM they charged with despising and disregarding this ordinance of humiliation. H_E revisits Nazareth and thither His disciples follow H_IM; and on the Sabbath day H_E teaches in the synagogue: but there also those whom H_E would fain benefit reject His proffered mercy, and ask contemptuously, “Whence hath this man wisdom? Is not this the carpenter, even the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and are not His brethren called James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and His sisters, are they not all here with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in H_IM.¹

And seeing in their treatment the verification

¹ St. Matt. xiii. 54—57; and St. Mark vi. 2, 3.

of the proverb, that "a Prophet is not without honour, save in his own country;" H_E could do there no mighty work, but, rejected and hunted out H_E went round about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people. Duteous in His allegiance to the Church, H_E goes up to keep the feast of Dedication; and as H_E discoursed of His Mission as the Sent of the FATHER, His unbelieving hearers accuse H_IM of blasphemy, and, filled with rage, would have inflicted on H_IM summary punishment on the very spot, and took up stones to stone H_IM, as aforetime they had done when H_E truthfully declared unto them, Before Abraham was I am. It was nothing that H_E called them to witness that all His miracles had been acts of mercy and beneficence; that H_E had healed their sick; given sight to their blind, and that their dead had been restored to life: when H_E asked them for which of these works it was that they stoned H_IM; their only answer was, the accusation of blasphemy.¹ They would not see in His works the attestation of His words, but on His iteration of His Divinity, they grew still more clamorous and vehement, and H_E barely escaped out of their hand, into the place called Bethabara, within the country of Petrea, where John at first baptized. It was nothing that it was his LORD, or that it was innocent blood which

¹ St. John x. 33.

Judas betrayed : for thirty pieces of silver did he sell his Master, and then the persecution of the Son of Man reaches its height.

HE Who was assailed in the wilderness by the devil, in the triple assault, answering to the triple form of sin by which our first parents fell ; HE was now again attacked of the evil angels, and in His bitter Agony, the persecution and reviling was upon HIM in awful intensity, for against HIM, a holy and guiltless Being, had been spoken falsely all the evil of a guilty world. Bitter may we conceive the taunts of the enemy of souls to have been in that dark hour, when HE would aggravate as real, that guilt which was assumed and imputed that it might be atoned for by our spotless JESUS. And if we pass from Gethsemane to the Judgment Hall, we have only to summon to our minds what has been so vividly brought before us day by day in Epistle, Lesson, Gospel, and Psalms, to fill up the outline of that bitter persecution even unto death, which God's own SON, Mary's Child, and Mary's God, endured that righteousness might flourish out of the earth. But thus was the Tree planted amid the dwellings of man, whose leaves should be for the healing of the nations. Fragrant were the odours which came from the bruising of this Righteous Branch. They are the incense which makes acceptable every prayer, and sanctifies every obedience. But oh ! how bitter was the intensity of the Sufferings of the Son of Man. How dark His woe !

How unspeakable His anguish ! Never before nor since was there such sorrow ; such persecution, so great and so undeserved, so endured, and so rewarded !

His truthful declaration of His own resurrection is made a charge against HIM : and that HE has done despite to the holiness and Majesty of His Co-eternal FATHER, this too, is charged against HIM. HE Who had spent a life in teaching and practising obedience, Who never resisted lawful authority, and submitted meekly to injustice, was charged with making HIMSELF a king to the exclusion of Cæsar. Pronounced innocent by a double acquittal, HE undergoes the smart and the shame of an offender. Declared to have no fault found in HIM, HE is condemned to die. And lo ! to-day we kneel before His awful Cross, and see HIM Who rendered an un-sinful obedience ; HIM, Who amid all the obloquy, and the shame, yet shrank not from establishing the righteousness of man. We see HIM, Who at any moment might have withdrawn from this awful doom, whereby alone man's redemption could be wrought, enduring the Cross, despising the shame. We see HIM persecuted and slain, and all for righteousness' sake. Surely none can ever so merit the blessedness which is theirs, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, as did HE Who is now exhibited to our faith, our dying God. There hangs our JESUS, soldiers have stripped HIM, and as, naked the first man fell, so in like manner does HE Who

clothes man with raiment, beasts with hides, fishes with scales and shells, the earth with flowers, and heaven with stars : so does H^E, despoiled of clothes, win back for Adam's race the joys of Paradise. There hangs our J^ESUS : to shame is added pain, and the tender and the sacred limbs of the Son of Man are nailed to the accursed tree. There hangs our J^ESUS between heaven and earth, naked, bleeding, forlorn, despicable, a spectacle of miseries, the scorn of men. The sun veils its glories at its M^AKER's shame : the earth quakes at its C^REATOR's dying : the air reverberates at its L^OR^D and King's expiring ; the rocks are shaken, and the veil of the temple is rent from top to bottom ; yea, the whole frame of the world acknowledges in the Man of sorrows the S^ON of G^OD.

Well, earth and hell have done their worst. They have persecuted unto the death, for righteousness' sake, the L^OR^D our Righteousness. Taken from prison, and from judgment, H^E was cut off out of the land of the living, H^E made His grave with the wicked.¹

But H^E has not failed of the blessing which H^E merited. The grave held H^IM not : hell detained H^IM not : H^E has come forth from the tomb : the heavens have been opened, and to the first of the noble army of martyrs was vouchsafed the vision, ere he was stoned to death, of the King of martyrs, the Son of Man standing at the right hand of G^OD.

¹ Isaiah liii. 8, 9.

Yes, Stephen saw, ere yet he died, what after death and judgment he shall experience, that "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness, for great is their reward in heaven." The human CHRIST is advanced to that highest of all posts of dignity short of His own ineffable God-head,—the right hand of God. Great is the reward of the persecuted Son of Man.—HIMSELF at God's right hand, and in HIM for His redeemed, is won for ever thronedom in heavenly places. Yea, this was the glory which was set before HIM. In the strength of this, HE went on His way rejoicing, amid His dolorous sorrow. Great is His reward in heaven. It has its increase in each burst of the angelic quire, which tells out in rejoicing strains the repentance of another sinner. Great is His reward in heaven. On His Cross HE made a show of principalities and powers, triumphing over them in it. There HE trampled on sin, and death and hell, and laid them low. And now HE stands for ever at God's right hand. Now has manhood pre-eminency over all ranks of created intelligences ; none are above the Son of Man : to HIM is given the Name JESUS, at which every knee shall bow, both of things in heaven and things in earth.¹ Angelic obedience is paid to human sovereignty. A king upon His throne, HE sways His mediatorial kingdom ; a king upon His throne, HE shall reign for ever and ever, when all the objects of His mediatorial rule shall have been

¹ Philip. ii. 10.

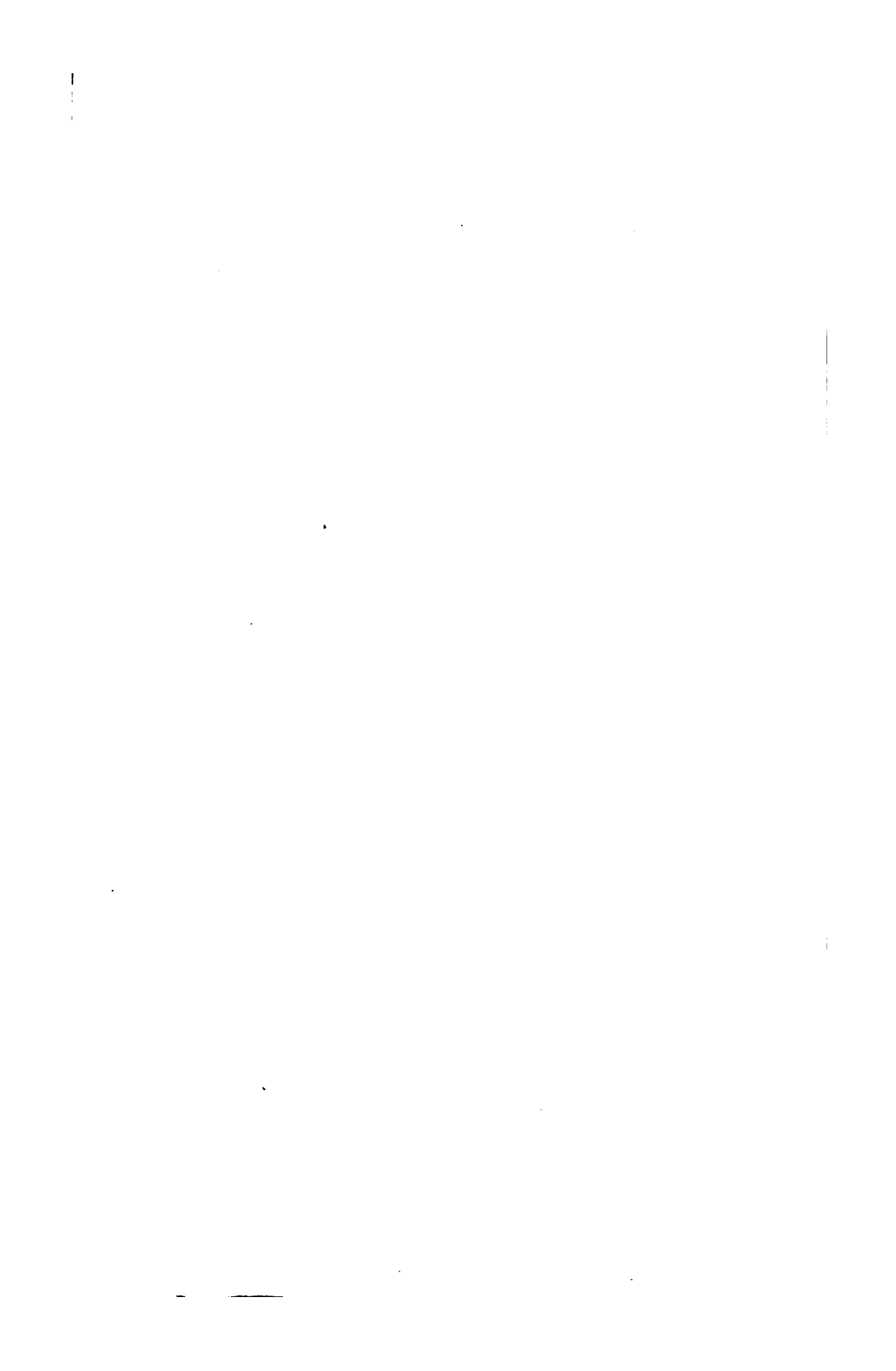
accomplished in the fruition and glorification of His redeemed. And all this, because here HE, being JESUS CHRIST the Righteous, yet lived a life of suffering, and died a death of ignominious and cruel shame.

Let us not then shrink from following HIM, or throw away the thorny crown, unless we would make forfeit of the glorious diadem. Let us know, that as to the poverty of spirit, which is the Martyr's school, is promised the kingdom of Heaven ; so to persecution and suffering patiently endured in the thought of CHRIST'S cross, which is the Martyr's acting of the lesson learned in that school, is given greatness of reward in that heavenly kingdom. Love we on this day, as week by week it comes round with its saddening call to the crucifixion of worldly and selfish aims ; love we on this the day of the SAVIOUR'S Dying, to have our eyes fixed on the bleeding wounds of our compassionate REDEEMER, and upon the streaming fountain of our joy and peace let our weary souls

“ Wait, like the parched earth on April skies.”

And as we gaze objectively on our dying God, let us subjectively realize the great lesson of this day, in the thought that they who would be saved by the Cross, must bear it in weariness and faintness after HIM Who carried its overpowering weight up the heights of Calvary, and that we must crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. Let us not draw back because the road is long, and the journey painful ; for the end is certain, and the reward is great.

Let us be very careful to chasten our inward tempers ; or our outward austerities will work no good for us. Let us see that it is for righteousness, not for censoriousness, not for pride, not for anger, not for covetousness, not for unkindness, not for wrath, not for evil speaking, not for busying ourselves in other men's matters, that we are persecuted. Let us be careful that it is falsely, and for CHRIST's sake, not truly and from our own fault that we are reviled. And let us be ever learning in patience and in quietness the endurance and the love of the Martyr's testimony, and then we shall know at length in God's good time, how great is their reward in Heaven who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.



SERMON VII.

THE COMFORT OF THE CHRISTIAN MOURNER.

ST. MATTHEW V. 4.

"BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN, FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED."

AND now, beloved, our LORD is in His grave. His sorrows are over, "It is finished," as respects all the humiliation, and the shame, and the suffering of the Son of Man. His Body rested on the holy Sabbath in the new made tomb ; but where were the women whom yesterday we saw at the foot of the Bleeding Cross? Where was penitent Peter? Where the loved disciple? Where the Virgin Mother? What was their occupation ; what their feelings? Can we doubt that in solemn stillness they were mourners? And what then can so well occupy our thoughts to-day, as the fellowship which Christian mourners have with HIM Whom it pleased the LORD to bruise, and Whom HE put to grief? For now is the LORD of Life crucified,

dead, and buried; and wherefore, but because upon HIM was laid the chastisement of our peace? wherefore, but because the LORD hath laid on HIM the iniquity of us all? It was for us men, and for our salvation, that our LORD JESUS CHRIST endured the Cross, despising the shame; and therefore we do well to stand in mourning by His grave, for there we may learn by GOD'S grace, how true it is that "Blessed are they which mourn, for they shall be comforted."

And who are they that mourn so as to be included in this benediction? The word here rendered "those that mourn" has primary reference to those who grieve for the loss of friends; but it were very unduly to limit the sense of this beatitude, to confine it to such as are thus drawn within the shades of sorrow. Viewed as one of the common causes of grief and as being itself the unrepealed penalty of that which is the cause of all sorrow and the parent of itself, Death, the child and penalty of sin, is indeed that which makes many mourners; and the Disciples of HIM Who wept at the grave of Lazarus may not be denied the consolation which comes of the tear that gushes forth when loved ones are taken from us. But it is required of us, by the scope of our present subject, to take a more extended view of that mourning which makes those by whom it is experienced—Blessed.

The mourners who are here commended are those who feel contrition or godly sorrow arising from a

due and adequate sense of their wants and sins. It is ever loss which affects us with sorrow, for what is pain but the loss of ease ; what is misery but the loss of comfort ; nay, what is sin but the loss of holiness, the loss of unity with the Divine perfections ? Now, there may be, and there is a sorrow which has no blessing ; there are mourners that sorrow without hope ; and so there is a sorrow concerning which we can hope nothing. There is a sorrow that proceeds simply from the influence of external impressions ; from a particular condition of the physical system, from morbid apprehensions, from melancholy, or from anything and everything, rather than a moral principle worthy one of God's redeemed creatures. Again, there is a sorrow which though it springs out of moral considerations, is not based upon any sufficiently positive, laudable principle, but is altogether of a neutral and indifferent character. There is moreover a sorrow that comes of some of the baser passions, is engendered by malice, envy, covetousness, ambition, servile fear, and the like, and tends also to an evil end, to revenge, impatience or despair. Thus the Apostle tells us of a "worldly sorrow," and a "sorrow that worketh death."

It is therefore certain that all mourning is not Christian mourning, and that there is a sort which cannot give to those who experience it any just title to this Beatitude. It becomes necessary then that we should truly and with exactness define the condi-

tions of Christian mourning. And here let us revert to our first definition, that it is contrition, or godly sorrow, conceived upon the sense of our wants and sins.

The sins which cause this sorrow are, first, the original pravity of our nature and the proneness of our natural part to evil : secondly, the actual and habitual sins of those who hold their regeneration in unrighteousness : and thirdly, the many slips and falls of those who yet are seeking to live wholly and strictly unto God. And as to wants, they are such as have reference to our spiritual part, being the lack of original righteousness, holiness and purity ; of strength and sufficiency to do the duty which we owe to GOD our CREATOR, CHRIST our REDEEMER, and the SPIRIT our SANCTIFIER.

In all these particulars there is abundant reason for Christian mourning, to us the sons of men, alike on our own account and on the behalf of others. For it is the part of a Christian to mourn, and he rightly mourns when his sorrow springs either from zeal for the honour and glory of God, or a concern for the good of mankind. Thus we may see that piety and charity are the two principles into which all true Christian mourning must be resolved. And the contrariety of sin to the nature and goodness of God, will form a natural provocative to the exercise of these affections of the soul in respect of mourning. When again we consider how opposed sin is to the true nature of man ; how destructive of his inward peace and satisfaction, and lastly how inimi-

cal to his interest, both temporal and spiritual, private and public, present and eternal ; and further, how prone we are to commit it ; and lastly, if we consider how much of this great evil there is in the world ; how iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold ; that the whole world lies in wickedness ; that there are but few that pretend to any strictness or regularity of living, and yet fewer who discharge their pretensions truly and sincerely ; when we consider all these things, we shall find cause enough and to spare for Christian mourning, and we may enter into the feelings which prompted the language of the Psalmist—"Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not Thy Law:" and again "It grieveth me because of the transgressors."

Great cause of sadness is there too, in the miseries which abound upon every side of us. Most merciful is the dispensation which holds us back from prying into the secrets of futurity ; as in other respects, so in this, "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." It requires a strong back to bear the burden of each day's toil ; but if the labour of several days were put into one, endurance must eventually be overtaxed ; and so miseries and evils being mental burthens, the temper which makes the mischiefs of the morrow the heritage of to-day, is one most alien to that merciful provision of our good and gracious FATHER, which would have us learn by the discipline of to-day, the strength we

need for the duty of to-morrow. If man could see at one glance all the accumulated mischief of a life, his heart would fail within him, and he would give up the contest in despair; but it is not permitted him to see far before him : and it is forbidden him to make any effort to stir up that foul residuum into the waters of life, which if he be content to draw this day's supply of water from, the stream of opportunities as it flows by him will be tolerably clear; but which, if this bottom of the future be disturbed by a vain curiosity will be turbid and unwholesome. And lest any should urge that in this view there is not much room for Christian mourning on the score of misery, since to those who do not add the evils of to-morrow to those of to-day, life is not such a sorrowful thing, we have only to urge, that it is not our own misery only which demands our sorrow, but that of all with whom we have the fellowship of a common nature. And here one day's misery is indeed enough; let the eye travel through kingdoms, or provinces; over counties, towns, or neighbourhoods, or let it but be occupied with a few families here and there, and there will be sorrow enough to constitute the Christian mourner. Here a shattered estate; there the ravages of cruel disease; there the desolation of death; in another place the bitterness of discord, and the torments of anger; but why fill up the picture? In this respect there is mourning enough; but alas! not always Christian mourning. He only mourns over these ills in a Christian

spirit who sees in them the tokens of the fall, and desires of our good LORD by His grace to heal up the breaches which they cause in the harmony of His Kingdom.

We should also mourn at the thought of the vanity of all worldly and created good. This is a sorrow which comes from the increase of wisdom, and is the result of a due appreciation of our own destiny, and the alone sufficiency of God to fill the soul which HE has breathed into man. And in the uncertainty of our attainment of that salvation which was purchased for us by the SON of God is there still further cause for sorrow and mourning. Surely there is much cause that a man should be of a sorrowful spirit, when he considers that whereas his everlasting happiness is a matter of the most infinite concern, yet it is suspended on an uncertain issue, and that, while by God's grace he need not fail, yet by his own perverseness he may.

It is in reference to the many causes which the Christian has for sorrow, that St. Augustin in his confessions and meditations so frequently speaks of the grace of tears, and so often prays for it. And herein we understand the saying of the wise man, "By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better."¹ Herein we learn why the devotion of Hannah should be expressed by her being a woman of a sorrowful spirit.² The royal prophet spent much of his time in holy mourning. The lamenta-

¹ Eccles. vii. 3.

² 1 Sam. i. 15.

tions of Jeremiah testify to his sorrow, wherein we see how truly it was his wish that his head were waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night. And here, before passing on to consider the blessedness of those who mourn, let me say one word of that great wisdom of our beloved mother the Church, which, knowing the great duty of Christian mourning, provides seasons for its regular occurrence, no more leaving us without directions for mourning than for prayer. In the Song of Solomon, the Church is compared to a dove, which, though eminent for other qualities, is yet especially remarkable for her continual mourning.¹ And if in this she has caught her notes of sadness from her Divine Lord, she has not failed to impress them upon her devout children.

That some have done wisely, and have dowered their own generation and posterity with large blessings, by the practice of an austere ascetism, is not to be doubted : but the Christian Church would not be fulfilling her mission as a light and a blessing among the nations, if she enjoined upon all her children a perpetual and entire seclusion from the active duties and employments of the world. As little would she be discharging her duty as the home of all Christian blessedness, if she failed to provide for Christian mourning. Accordingly we find her chequering her year with fast and festival : and if only her children would more faithfully observe her

¹ Isaiah xxxviii. 14. "I did mourn as a dove."

weekly, monthly and annual fasts, there would be much more real happiness in the world ; and the number of God's elect would hasten to their accomplishment ; for it is the blessing of those who mourn that they shall be comforted.

None are so susceptible of joy as those who first have sorrowed. It has been said of old, let a Christian man grieve, and then rejoice that he doth so : and truly there is a gentleness in sorrow which admits us to visions which in seasons of higher prosperity we cannot realize. Yea, the mourning soul is like watered earth, which yieldeth more abundant fruitfulness by that means. Moreover, the mind which is fully habituated to mourn for the emptiness and vanity of all worldly goods, will be saved much disappointment in respect of them. But the blessedness of mourners is especially prospective ; and their comfort is renewed for another and a better state. The reaping in joy especially belongs to those who sow in tears ; and godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, when all other worketh death. And this assurance arises out of the very notion of comfort and refreshment, by which terms are expressed the joys of heaven, of which none are capable but sad and disconsolate mourners : nor indeed is heaven, the vision of God, and revelation of His favour, ever represented to us more invitingly than when it is declared to be the wiping away of all tears from all eyes,—the eyes of those who went mourning all the day, all their life long.

And now, brethren, that our SAVIOUR richly merited the blessing of the mourner none will doubt, who have kept their feet by the Church's rule, and fashioned their goings after her pattern during this holy season, this blessed week.

Our JESUS was born into this our world in the hour of nature's deepest gloom ; and though oft-times her cold blackness is at the Christmas time clad in robes of snowy whiteness, fit emblem of His glorious innocence, yet it is not without significance, that HE Who came for the rejoicing of the people, should have His sorrow marked out to faithful and discerning eyes in the very time of His Nativity. Of the childhood of the SON of GOD we are not taught anything concerning sorrow. We know not how early began the mourning with which HE was oppressed and afflicted. The musings of the childhood of JESUS our LORD must have been far other than fall to the lot of common childhood ; but, where it has not been revealed to us, it becomes us not to pry : yet the truth is obvious, that infancy and childhood are as full of cloud as sunshine ; of tears as smiles : in token that even the blessedness of children comes not without mourning.

Let us pass on however, to see our LORD enter upon His public ministry. What was the first act of His public life ? HE is led by the SPIRIT into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Here for forty days does HE sorrow : pleasant bread comes not nigh HIM, nay, HE wholly fasts, and in sorrow

enters upon the great work which is before HIM ; and in sorrow does HE prosecute it even to the end. And if there are in His conduct towards others, and His Presence on festive occasions, intimations that mirth is not forbidden by His religion, and that there is still as of old a time to laugh ; yet it is to be remarked, and with trembling, by those who never sorrow, amid their joy, that, while we are told that HE wept, we are never told that HE laughed. Yea it is the uniform description of the sacred volume, that as a tender plant out of a dry ground groweth up in stunted and unsightly measures, so was HE without form and comeliness, neither had HE any beauty, which, when we should see HIM, should cause us to desire HIM.

And wherefore came His sorrow ? It was for sin, not His own, but ours. " HE was wounded for our transgression, HE was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon HIM, and with His stripes we are healed." It came of man's miseries, not His own, but ours. " HE hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." It came of the sinfulness of worldly joys, which yet HE saw the children of men eagerly and greedily grasping at, though the fleeting shadows would not, and will not be taken hold of by them. It came, too, of the uncertainty of man's salvation : HE saw how among those HE came to save, there were millions who would reject His mercy, and despise His grace : and His tender heart mourned for their sad estate. Yes, on

these accounts we find HIM standing at the grave of Lazarus and weeping ; we find HIM filled with the consciousness of the woes hanging over Jerusalem, and weeping. We find HIM in Gethsemane agonized and borne down with an anguish to which none have ever tasted a bitterness at all corresponding. Tears relieve not His grief, but the little fontinels of the veins in which His precious blood flowed through His sacred Body are forced open, and His sweat was, as it were, "great drops of blood."

Let none dare to picture the sorrow of that dark hour : for who shall rise to the intensity of the grief of an all-holy mind weighed down with the imputation of sin, and grieved with the agonizing thought, that the mercy HE was now at such tremendous cost working out, would be set at nought ? HE knew that not only would the holy nation consummate its guilt in His own murder, but HE foresaw that those washed in His blood would "crucify the SON of GOD afresh, and put HIM to open shame." With what sorrow must HE have deprecated the treachery of Judas, and witnessed the denial of St. Peter : and oh ! how mournfully did HE ascend the hill whereon HE was to die. Death affrighted HIM not : bodily pain distracted HIM not ; privation, and insult, and contumely, and scorn moved HIM not ; but GOD's righteous vengeance against sin had to be endured. HE was about to be deserted of His GOD, and others HE knew would be involved in a coming eternity, in that aw-

ful horror which comes of banishment from the love, and life, and peace of HIM Who is the Joy and Energy of universal nature. His was indeed mourning, such as none beside have ever known, or can know. Words but weaken the force of our apprehension of that sorrow which is the impersonation and sanctification of all sorrow: the grief and mourning of the SON of Man, the Man of sorrows.

And as HE merited, so HE received, that blessing of "those that mourn." It was given HIM to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Amid all His grief, HE would know that all should not be in vain, and in the fidelity of some HE had the compensation for the unfaithfulness of others. HE was comforted, when, after forty days, HE was an hungered, for angels came and ministered unto HIM. HE was comforted, in the darkness of His Gethsemane,—there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening HIM. HE was comforted, when the worst was over, and the anguish had been endured which elicited the fearful "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" there came to HIM messages from the FATHER'S throne, that it was enough; HE had suffered, and in suffering HE had triumphed. HE had mourned, and now HE was to be comforted; the sense of sonship which sin had shut out, the sense of confidence which sin destroyed, are both restored, and "FATHER! into Thy hands I commend My Spirit," tells us how truly the awe of "My GOD, My GOD, why hast THOU forsaken ME?" is exchanged for the trium-

phant "It is finished." "Finished" the work I came to do: "Finished" the power of sin, and death, and hell: "Finished" the vengeance of the wrath of ALMIGHTY GOD: "Finished" the redemption of a ruined world: "Finished" the restoration of those who will be saved. Yea, "Finished" was the travail of His soul; HE was satisfied, HE was comforted. His spirit took its flight to HIM Who gave it; and the sacred Body is laid to rest in hallowed ground. HE had not miscalculated the love, nor the power of HIM to Whom HE made the commendation of that spirit, and lo! HE was comforted: His undefiled spirit walked unharmed amid the horrors of the lost, and no touch, no taint, of foul corruption could fasten its hateful contact upon His sacred Body. HE was comforted; the third day from His meritorious Dying, HE raises His Body from the grave, and the FATHER restores to that Body its life-giving Spirit: lo! angels are vouchsafed to watch the place where HE lay, and to tell the women, early at the sepulchre, that HE was gone before them into Galilee. HE was comforted; the everlasting doors roll back, the angelic guards admit a man's claim to admission within the eternal gates, and the King of glory sits in human form at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

HE mourned, and HE is comforted. From His glorious throne HE stoops down to take from each wreath of thorns wherewith His redeemed are crowned, the poison which comes of the sorrow, which His healing

touch has not reached. And none who call Him LORD need sorrow as those that are without hope.

Let us realize all things as seen in the shadows of Calvary's sorrow : let us lie in the grave with our buried LORD ; let us mourn both with CHRIST, and in the manner wherein He is our great Example, and we shall be blessed, we shall be comforted.

Let us have a mournful sense of sin ; and we shall be comforted in avoiding it. Let us mourn for the uncertainty of salvation ; and we shall labour doubly to make our calling and election sure. Let us mourn for the miseries of the world ; and we shall do all that in us lies to lighten the load of human grief. Let us mourn for the loss of original righteousness ; and we shall strive, and labour, that the Righteousness of JESUS our LORD may flourish out of the earth, and all the kingdoms of the world become the Kingdom of our LORD, and of His CHRIST.

Oh ! why is it that men will go on sorrowing without hope, when there is blessedness pronounced on those who will but mourn as Christians ?

To grieve for our dead ; to weep for our sins ; to bewail the unhappiness which is in the world ; and to lament the dishonour done to God's forbearance, are all Christian duties. Let no murmuring, no reproaches, no unlawful efforts, no unjust repinings, mingle with our grief, and then there is of a surety a blessing for those that mourn. They shall here be like to CHRIST, and to all who have followed the Man of sorrows the most closely in this vale of

tears. Behind every cloud they shall see the bow of heavenly promise. Pardon shall attend on a sense of sin : contentment shall despoil want of its terror ; and the resurrection shall light up the darkness of the tomb. Yea, as now but a few hours must pass ere Lenten sorrow shall be changed for Paschal joy, so sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

He that now goeth on his way weeping, and bringeth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him. Yea, welcome sorrow, trial, fear, and the shadow of death, if only our sins be blotted out, and our lot secure in the lowest room in the light of God's countenance, before the throne of His Beauty, in our home, and in our rest for ever.

SERMON VIII.

THE VISION OF GOD THE HERITAGE OF PURENESS.

ST. MATTHEW V. 8.

“BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL
SEE GOD.”

WE have now passed, dearly beloved, as it were, from under the dark shadow of the Cross, and are already in the brightness of that light which streams from the risen Body of our glorified LORD. A lighter and a more joyous atmosphere seems to be about us. Our thoughts have been of suffering and of mourning; of anguish and of woe; our discipline has been a faint and feeble following of the Man of Sorrows. But lo! His travail is over. JESUS CHRIST is risen to-day. 'Tis our triumphant holy day. HE is no longer crucified, dead, and buried;—but is risen. Voices speak from His tomb, “HE is not here, HE is risen.” Yea, HE is alive for evermore, and we may no longer linger

amid the trials of His Gethsemane, the horrors of His Calvary, or the silent gloom of His tomb made in the hewn rock. No, we have journeyed with HIM in all the times and tokens of His humiliation ; we have accompanied HIM from Bethlehem to Calvary ; we have seen in the Child born amid the discomforts of a stranger's temporary home, the image of a man crucified in the midst of shame and obloquy, and now it is permitted us to connect the Conception and the Resurrection, to trace one unmingled course of Purity from the Annunciation which foretold a Birth, to the salutation which proclaimed a victory over Death. Nor will our theme be found to fail us. The Beatitude we consider to-day is every way as suited to Paschal joy, as those that have gone before have harmonized with Passion-tide.

We have disturbed from the sacred order of their original progression, the measured dependence of these benedictions, but we have not, as we trust, done violence to the lessons which infinite Wisdom would have us draw from their high monitions. We acknowledge that, as the enunciation of a moral code, there is cohesion and beauty in the sequence which marks their first delivery. But if we have not done wrong in connecting the Blessing of the Meek with a triumphal entry of Judah's despised and rejected King into the city of His sovereignty ; if mercifulness as a pervading attribute of the Son of Man, served to teach us that vengeance upon some is for the good of

others ; if the thought of the humiliation on the Mount of Olives, and of the Agony in the garden, were considered as entitling to the blessing of the poor in spirit ; if the treacherous fruit of the covetousness of Judas, was fittingly contrasted with the hungerings and thirstings of the Son of Man after righteousness ; if the blessedness of the Peacemaker was found to consort well with the character of HIM who gave the new commandment of love ; if the Dying of the Son of Man suggested, in all its circumstances, save one, the SAVIOUR as persecuted for righteousness' sake ; and if the humiliation of His tomb, and the probable circumstances of His loved ones in yesterday's trying juncture, made it most fitting that we should seek then to define the blessedness of those that mourn ; then assuredly it is the fitting topic of this day's meditations to consider the blessedness of the " Pure in heart."

What is purity in heart ? The heart signifies the inner man, and especially the practical part, or principle of action ; and this purity of heart is of two sorts : first, that which is the opposite of pollution ; and secondly, that which is interfered with by mixture ; water, because it is clear, is said to be pure ; and wine, because it is unadulterated is said to be pure : thus both fleshliness and hypocrisy are shut out.

A man may be said to be pure in heart in the sense of freedom from pollution ; when all fleshliness is mortified ; when all impurity of flesh and

spirit is put away ; not merely when the foul act is avoided, and the unchaste word eschewed, but when the lustful thought is checked, and the wandering eye restrained. But more than this must be done. Pride and high looks must be cast down ; the uncleanness of strife, and faction, and sedition, must be guarded against. Worldliness, too, must be mortified, for the touch of earth is pollution, and as the love of the world cannot co-exist with the love of God, so is attachment to it inconsistent with that purity to which is vouchsafed the vision of the ALMIGHTY. The pure man will banish the covetous desire, and give no entertainment to the suggestions of evil, whether they proceed from wicked men or apostate angels. Upon the robe which is purely white, the smallest stain will show ; and with the pure in heart, this extreme sensitiveness to sin guards them against the approaches of its contaminating touch.

And as the pure in heart are clean, so are they sincere. Hypocrisy is far away from them. There is no treacherous dealing either with themselves or with God : no attempt at compromise between duty and inclination ; no halting between God and mammon, between HIM Who claims our service, and the seductions of our own lusts ; of our own ends and interests ; nor is there any postponing of the duty owed to God, from a love of the praise of men. It is an offence against God's Law to represent ourselves as better than we

are. Still there is, in that act, culpable as it is, some homage rendered to the majesty of truth, inasmuch as there is at least an acknowledgment that *we ought* to be other and better than we are ; and, so far, this is a sin less damnable, than open, professed, avowed and scandalous evil-living. But purity in the sense of sincerity is offended against, when we will not choose decidedly between God and Baal ; when we will not give up to God the best and choicest of all that we have and all that we are ; when we will not love and serve HIM with all our heart, but do admit and set up against HIM other rivals in our affections.

You see then, beloved, how high is the estate of those who are pure in heart. It is an estate to which but few, alas ! attain, and yet for which all must strive. None that are fleshly, none that are hypocritical, and insincere, can see God. True it is, that while we live here, and are burthened with the body of this flesh, there will ever be in our members a law warring against the law of the Spirit. Somewhat of impurity : somewhat of imperfection there will ever be about us. And all this but indicates our need of daily discipline, of daily washing of the feet, that we may be clean every whit. Ever and anon there will be some duplicity ; some relics of hypocrisy ; somewhat of self, and of love for our own fame, and our own interests, interposing to sully our best and holiest actions : but these, by the pure in heart, will be at once detected, and at once

cast out. Those who are thus pure will not suffer such principles as these to have dominion over them. They will not allow these passions to be their masters, but will keep them in subjection. They will possess a tenderness of conscience, and a fear of God's displeasure, which will preserve them from grievous falls, and at all hazards they will labour and strive earnestly to be cleansed from *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

And what is the reward of the "pure in heart?" "They shall see God:" to them it shall be given to behold God. The same reward is also promised to the poor in spirit, "for," it is said, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven," and the same also to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, their "reward is great in heaven." What then is intended by these items? It seems to be this; that purity of heart is the faculty wherewith those otherwise qualified for God's Presence do see HIM. It is an old saying, "That as God alone sees the heart, so the heart alone can see God." The heart is that which meets the eternal Spirit, and is met of it, which dwells in God, and has God dwelling within it. Yet, "without holiness no man shall see the LORD." Our hearts are capable of enjoying God, but they must be pure, in order to do so. The trained eye of the upward-soaring eagle may gaze upon the brightness of the noon-day sun, and bask delightedly in the burning beams, which, to a weak, and failing, or distempered vision, are only afflicting and

painful to behold. To the healthy and vigorous body, the sun, rejoicing in his course, is a means of increase, and of strength, but when the seeds of corruption have gained entrance, it does but precipitate decay. So also, it is only the pure in heart who can see God and live. There needs a cleansing and a purifying of our tempers and dispositions, and a correction, and due regulation of their influence upon the life, before we can see God. But if we are pure in heart, the blessing will be vouchsafed to us, we shall see God.

This vision of God begins *here*. The pure in heart discern the footfall of His most holy Presence, where to earthly and insincere eyes there is no trace of His sacred in-dwelling. Thus recognising His hand in all that falls out.

“HIM, if we seek in all things,

HIM shall we find ; and nearer than we deem.”¹

Seeing God everywhere, the pure in heart have their contentment, and murmur not, but rejoice in the thought of having brought the flesh into captivity to obey the spirit. Who but shall rejoice in the contrast presented by him who has mastered his fierce and fiery passions, when compared with the man who is the victim and the slave of all the disgusts and burnings of unmortified lusts? The pure in heart, moreover, have that vision of God which fills them with Christian confidence towards God and man : they need no disguises nor deceptions, nor

¹ Rev. I. Williams, “Thoughts in Past Years.”

are they led away by such : they stand naked and bare, save of that vesture of the saints which is the righteousness of CHRIST, in the sight of ALMIGHTY GOD. And in turn for being seen of God, they too see as HE sees, and in the light of His purity and His holiness none of the shadows and cheats of the world have any power to beguile them. "Prove me," is their unceasing prayer to GOD ; "Prove me, O LORD, and try me, and search out my reins and my heart," and their fearlessness in the sight of man is the happy and blessed opposite of that shrinking tremor of detection which is the lot and portion of the hypocrite.

But it is reserved for another and better state, to complete the reward of the pure in heart. "They shall see God" in heaven ; see HIM as HE is, and be known of HIM in all the glorious fulness of His Divine perfections. The grossness of the tabernacle wherein the soul now dwells, is that glass through which we now see darkly : this is that impenetrable screen which parts the material from the invisible world. The more abstracted we are therefore from the body, and the bodily life, the more fit shall we be, both to behold and to endure the rays of the Divine light. We know that the purer and finer our blood and spirits are, the freer and clearer are our thoughts. The more bright and transparent this glass is, the more readily will the ideal light dart in upon our souls. And the same will hold in proportion hereafter : the

purser the soul is, the purer will all its faculties and operations be, the less will it retain of corporeal gusts and relishes, the more recollected and undivided will be all its powers, for unity of thought follows unity of desire, and the fewer things a man desires, the fewer will be his thoughts, and consequently the more strong and vigorous will be their hold upon the objects whereon they do fix. And it shall be the reward of the pure in heart to have exceeding pureness wherewith they shall rise from the grave to see their MAKER as HE is.

The freer from defilement we keep our bodies now; the more we purify the thoughts of our hearts, so much the more glorious shall be our portion in the kingdom of the resurrection. Then, as now, we must see "through a glass," only the glass will be more or less clear according as purity of soul has been attained, for, even in this life pureness of heart and spirit give a particular brightness to the countenance, and make the face to beam with an inimitable glow. The pure in heart then shall see God, because of their greater fitness for this beatific vision: they shall also see HIM more intimately, because so God wills it, and because it will be their pleasure and their delight thus to be filled with God.

Remember, too, that pureness is that which likens us to God: the purer the soul is, the more does it resemble God, Who is essential purity. Likeness is the great endearment of love,

and the most natural source of delight and complacency. This we see in all orders of being, and in all degrees of life ; in the sympathetic affections of the vegetable kingdom ; in the voluntary consortings of animals ; and in the chosen friendships and attachments of man. But most of all may it be seen in what God has revealed to us of HIMSELF. What is it but the most perfect likeness and conformity of essences, understandings, and wills, that render the SACRED PERSONS of the Mysterious and adorable TRINITY so lovely and agreeable one to the other ? This it was which made the FATHER say of the SON : " This is My Beloved SON in Whom I am well pleased," because HE saw in HIM " the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person." And upon this is founded that mutual delighting which the other Sacred Persons enjoy from each other. That therefore which makes the Persons of the HOLY TRINITY delight in one another must needs make the pure soul delight in the HOLY TRINITY. A pure soul cannot but delight in a pure God, and the purer the soul is, the more will she love HIM and delight in HIM. Purity of heart even here anticipates, much more will it hereafter increase the joys of Heaven, and thus, abundantly, shall the pure in heart see God ; dive more and more into His boundless perfections ; fathom deeper and deeper into His inscrutable wisdom ; take larger and larger draughts of His ineffable love.

Such, brethren, is the nature, and such the reward of pureness of heart. Look we for the presence of the grace and of the crown in our Incarnate SAVIOUR? We must not seek as in the other Beatitudes to particularize one act here and another there. When the power of the Highest overshadowed the lowly Virgin, and caused her whom His SPIRIT had sanctified and made meet for the LORD's indwelling to conceive, then was that a "Holy Thing" which was to be born of her. "Conceived of the HOLY GHOST," born of the "Virgin Mary," what could our LORD be but "pure in heart?"

And accordingly in the moment of His Incarnation, as in every successive period of His natural life, HE did "see God." Into the God-head His pure manhood was in the moment of His Incarnation taken, and, from the first, human nature in His Person had the vision of ALMIGHTY GOD. In saintliness of life, in exalted pureness of teaching, such as none of the sons of men had ever before attempted, did the Son of Man fulfil the condition of the pure in heart. What taint, yea what touch of defilement ever came upon His virgin Innocence? When consorted HE with evil? When did fleshliness hold HIM back in the heavenly race? When did insincerity attach itself to any act or word of His? Where but in the brightness of the glorious sun falling upon the dazzling whiteness of the spotless snow, or shining upon the crystal surface of the pure ocean's bosom, shall we find even a

faint image of the pureness of our Incarnate God? Holy in His Nativity, HE was glorious in His Resurrection; and throughout His bitter Passion, HE was all pure. HE therefore did see, HE walked with, God.

Never but once was His vision of God dimmed, and then it was because bearing the full penalty of man's transgression, His pure soul wore a sinner's garb, and the consciousness of innocence might not in that moment of awful endurance abate the agony to which HE had voluntarily undertaken to submit.

And now, in the highest and holiest region of the high and holy place where, in light inaccessible, dwells the Eternal Majesty of the INFINITE; there, in human form, in a Body fitted to His pure and immaculate soul, there does the Manhood gaze on God. There has been won for mortal eye, the immortal strength which can drink in the light of God HIMSELF; the vision of the beauty of the court is swallowed up in the sight of the glory of the KING. The all-pure, and all-holy Son of Man is God and Man; and has gained for all who are His pure and living members, the Vision which is Life and Light.

Welcome then, beloved, the bright and happy token of this true Easter morn. The outer world has been clad as aforetime in sable and in mourning on the day of the SAVIOUR's Dying and during the time of the CREATOR's burial; but to-day, the Sun has

come forth from his darkened chamber, and greeted those with light and warmth, and cheerfulness, who already in the early morning have gathered round the Holy Altar in trembling love to meet their early risen LORD. Its happy shining should gladden our hearts, and if, prepared by the Lenten watchings of repentance and of sorrow, they are pure and clean, and tender, and meet for the Master's Blessing and the Master's Presence, that Blessing and that Presence shall be vouchsafed to and shall ever dwell with those, who, clad, in the garments of praise and thanksgiving, do honour to their risen LORD, and lift up their hearts unto HIM in Eucharistic Joy. In breaking of bread shall you know your LORD and your God.

The toils of His probation are over. JESUS CHRIST, the near Kinsman, yea the Elder Brother, of all who hear the Word of God and keep it, has HIMSELF fulfilled the Law HIMSELF gave. But more, HE has won for human nature the strength to fulfil that Law, which, as the Divine Lawgiver, HE has imposed upon us the creatures of His hand, the subjects of His grace, the objects of His love.

Fail not then of the blessing which HE now waits to bestow at His bounteous board on all whom HE makes welcome at this His feast of fat things. Come, for all things are ready! Come, and as you come hear the gentle voice of JESUS assuring you: —“It is I, be not afraid.”

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